デスマーチからはじまる異世界狂想曲
愛七
Illustration・shri
2

4-1. Misunderstanding is a Spice for Love Comedy

Satou's here. There's this thing called the butterfly dream, and I, who think that's it's better for it to be a dream, Satou.
<TLN: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhuangzi_%28book%29#.22The_Butterfly_Dream.22>

Could I ever go back to the nostalgic world someday?

◇

From the window, I can hear the traffic's noise outside. Did I oversleep?

I was able to obtain various knowledges yesterday, I also now understand Arisa's true color.
After the morning come, I've cooled off compared to the time when I knew that she bought herself with magic, and also, she has found out my true identity, so it would be dangerous to let her go.
I convince myself that she's a clue to go back to my original world.
Strangling the neck of a little girl just to be certain, that kind of thing is impossible for me. I'd rather run away to the end of the world.

While contemplating to lose myself to the warmth of the bed and go to sleep once again, the door opens with a bang.
There was no knock.

"Satou-san, are you awake~? Your lover has come~"

Martha-chan sure is energetic this early. Behind her, "I, I'm not his lov...", is Zena-san who is trying to block Martha-chan's mouth while wa-wa-ing.

"Good morning."

While I might be a half-awake. I raise my upper half to greet them.

It's cold. I took off my robe after I had finished the business and went to sleep just like that, but... I see, the shirt I wore under the robe was peeled off by Arisa.

"Oh, that's quite a good body~."

Martha-chan gazes at the half-naked me interestingly. Zena-san is also looking from behind while blushing.
I thought she's accustomed with nude men as a soldier.

"I'm sorry, for making you see such unsightly figure. I'll go change my clothes immediately."

I place my hand on the bed while trying to get up. "Ahn♪" ...It's lukewarm.
When I look below, a half-naked little girl is there. My hand is attached to her naked chest... When did she crawl in?
Seeing me sleeping together with a little girl, Zena-san's face changes from red to blue.

"...Master ...If you do that much ...I'll break."

From over there, as if waiting for this timing, Lulu is sleep-talking.
Looking over there, probably because she tossed around in bed, she's sleeping sideway with her back facing here. Since her clothes is short, her cute ass is facing here... I realize that she doesn't wear an underwear.
Furthermore the sheet is stained red... Huh? I didn't attack her okay?

"Fi, fi, filthy~~~~! Satou-san is an idiot~~~~!"

Zena-san runs out of the room while crying.
Martha-chan scratches her head, "Sorry for disturbing~ Please take your time~", and she closes the door.

This is the first time I've heard filthy in real life. It feels like someone's problem.

"Master, if you have a clean cloth, could you give it to me? Lulu seems to have a period."

I take out a piece of cloth from the bag.

"Thank you. Leaving that aside, do you not chase her? If you don't go soon, you won't be able to fix the misunderstanding you know~"

It's not like she's my girlfriend, but I'd hate it if a friend keep the unpleasant misunderstanding that I'm a lolicon.

Looking at the radar, she's at the main street just outside of this inn. As expected of a soldier, she's fast. As she is, she'll pass this room after a bit.
...This skill is convenient, but it's scary if a stalker obtains it.

While thinking stupid thing, I'm wearing the shirt on the floor, since I can't afford to jump out half-naked. It goes without saying that I have had my trousers since the beginning.

Measuring the timing, I jump out from the window to the street.
I land to block Zena-san's route. I catch the surprised Zena-san, and disperse her momentum by rotating once.

"Zena-san, it's a misunderstanding."

"But, you're sleeping with such a cute girl!"
"She just got on the wrong bed when she was half-asleep."

It's safe to sleep together since she's a child right?
I have been properly wearing trousers since yesterday. I want to strongly emphasize for my innocence.

I'm not a lolicon!

"There's also another girl with black hair! E, eu..."
"Do you mean the older sister with a bad sleeping posture, it seems to be her

period."

Zena-san finally weaken.

"B, but, a man who buy slaves usually makes them attend in the night too, that is according to Lilio!"

Damn you, co-worker Lilio.

"That depend on the person. Those sisters are substitutes for maids you know? The beastkin girls are to act as guards, but they're not suitable for shopping."

"...But"

Even if she understands, her emotion still hasn't catch up huh?
If I say "If I intend to do that then I'd have bought a sexy woman." here, she'd likely be even more angry.

"Today you're wearing something different from the one piece yesterday. There are a lot of neatly arranged frills, it's gorgeous. It's drawing out Zena-san's charm."

At time like this, it's better to praise and leave her in haze.
Saying, "Such thing... It's just the clothes...", Zena-san shyly says while looking a bit happy.

"It's lovely, but aren't you cold wearing light clothes?"
"No, Since I've trained myself, it's alright."

That's not a line from a woman, Zena-san.
Here I should have take her under a man's arm and say "You'll be warm here"!

"That's right, a shop just ahead is selling beautiful stoles. Why don't we see it together?"

"Is that true? I'll go!"

Yosh, I've successfully steered the conversation off the course.
Then, after comparing several dozens of stoles and shawl, and I give her the pink stole she chooses herself as a present, her mood has completely back to normal.
Woman's shopping sure is long eh?

◇

When we got back to the inn, Arisa is calling me from somewhere slightly apart from the stable.

"Welcome back, master. I'm glad that the misunderstanding seems to have been resolved."

The main culprit is saying it like it's not her problem, gets a poke on her forehead.

"I'm home, what are you doing on a place like this?"
"We're asking Liza-san to share her breads since we were hungry."
"So you've finished eating?"
"Yup, Lulu is still eating inside. She seems to lack appetite..."

I see, for a slow person, smoked meat is probably painful. I hand Arisa several pieces of copper coins and tell her to buy some fruits.

I go back to my room for a change of clothes.
Zena-san is waiting at the inn bar in the first floor while drinking fruit juice.

Back in the room, I pour water to the copper basin on the table from the Hell Water Jug, and use it to wash my face. Since there doesn't seem to be any bed hair, I wet my hand for a bit and use it to comb my hair. Let's look for hairdresser in this world next time.

I change into a clean robe, and put on a new boots. When I'm tying my boots, I found a dried-up fruit.
Did Arisa throw this? Although, Martha-chan will clean it even if I leave it alone, I put it inside the storage since there's something that I have something in mind.
That remind me, I try to take out the 『Piping Hot Meal』 I put inside it during the first day I came here. It remains piping hot. I bite it after confirming that it's not rotten with appraisal. The taste also remain as it was.
『Piping Hot Meal』 and 『Dried-up Fruit』. Since it's interesting, let's test something out.
I allocate 1 skill point to Item Box skill and activate it. I store the remaining 『Piping Hot Meal』 inside it.
Since I likely will forget about it again, I put a note on the Notebook inside the Exchange tab.

◇

"Thank you for waiting, Zena-san."
"Don't worry, I was just having a chat with Martha-chan."

"This nuisance will disappear~.", and so Martha-chan goes back to work.

In her place, Arisa, Liza and the others are coming back, I call them.

Lulu doesn't look too well so she return to the room. I ask for a passing-by maid to bring water to the room, and give her few copper coins for tips.

I go outside with Zena-san, bringing Arisa, Liza and the others.
Putting 10 silver coins in a small bag, I give it to Arisa to buy their change of clothes and other daily necessities.
Liza and the others will act as guards and luggage carriers.

"Master, is it okay to use the extra changes money for sweets?"

"As long as it's only as far as 1 big copper coin, it's okay. Since that include for lunch, don't use it all for snacks."

"Yee~s", Arisa departs to the east street while saying so. Pochi and Tama are going along on both her sides, she looks like a children gang boss. Liza who follows from behind is looking like a parent.

"She's a very affable slave isn't she?"
"I don't know if that attitude is fit for a slave, but that girl is an easy-going person."

I don't know how a slave should appropriately act, but if she keeps being that exaggerated to her surrounding, I'm confident that she'd become a failure of a human being later.

◇

Since the weather is quite nice, we decided to take a walk together to a park nearby while chatting.

"Are you off-duty today?"
"No, I will have a duty this afternoon."
"Didn't you also have a night duty just yesterday?"
"That's right, we don't have enough personnels so a half-day holiday is all I could get."

Hmm? You came to meet me despite being that busy? I can't imagine that she has fallen that hard, does she have other business?

"No, it's nothing really important... It was the first experience of real battle for some people in the army, so to calm their heart..."

I see, come to think of it, even if it was something that wouldn't endanger my life, I was curiously calm.

Although there's some lingering memories from the battle yesterday...

No, even while fighting and after the fight with the demon, I was fine, Was it because it didn't feel real?

And even though I have slaughtered an entire community of race similar to Liza, I don't feel even the slightest guilt, why is that?

I wonder if it's an effect of an unknown Special Abilty?

Questions are whirling around in my mind...

And it's going in circle.

A fluffy fragrance tickles my nose. When I raise my eyes, there's a face of worried Zena-san.

"Are you alright? Satou-san."
"I'm sorry, my thought just wandered off for a bit. I'm alright."

Even if I think this alone, the answer won't come, guess I'll consult with Arisa tonight...

Then, I ask Zena-san to help me practice spell chanting in the park, but since I couldn't concentrate, it's not working. Even still, I continue the chanting practice as if running away from something. Zena-san patiently guides the me who was like that. It lasts until Zena-san's off-duty time is over in the afternoon...

4-2. Little Girls Shopping

"Okay~ Here we go~. Everyone, follow me~."

In accordance with Arisa's command, Pochi and Tama follow along. Arisa talks as if she's not a slave but a master. I can't possibly do it, but I'm not thinking of doing it either.
Even if master allow it, as a slave I shouldn't intervene...

"First of all, it's underwear! So what kind of underwear you girls are wearing?"

While saying so, Arisa roll up Pochi's mantle and skirt to confirm. Even if she's from different race and a girl, I think she should be more discreet, but I wonder if it's fine since she's still a kid?

"You're lying~ You're not wearing one! Don't tell me, you too Liza-san?"
"Yes, I'm not wearing an underwear."

Arisa says, "I can't believe this~", exaggeratedly with both her hands inter-lapping on her open mouth. It's some kind of expression, but since we are from different races, we don't really understand it.

"We will buy underwears for everyone~ Now, let's go!"
"Oou~."
"Oou~, nano desu~."

Seemingly forgetting something, Arisa lead Tama and Pochi by hands while walking together. Since the 3 of them are children, they could become preys for pickpocket or crime, so I follow along closely.

"Still, this country's underwear is knicker too. I guess I have to make it myself If I want cute shorts or bra~"

She seems to be dissatisfied with the selections of the shop. I don't understand the lingo, but maybe it's a type of underwear?

"It's better than having no panties I guess, Liza-san, I'm sorry for a bit."

After saying so, Arisa hugs my waist. Apparently she's measuring the size.

"Uncle, please give me 9 of this size, and 3 for this and that. How much is it?"

She confidently tries to bargain the 10 big copper coins price the shokeeper named, and she drives it down to 6 big copper coins. Furthermore she also gets 5 decoration strings as bonus. Does she have negotiation and haggling skill?
No wonder she was entrusted for shopping by master.

The 15 pieces of underwears are put into a bag. Physical labor is my role.

◇

"Kuh~ I'm losing to the sweet smells~."
"Smells good~."
"Nano desu~."

I stop the three people who are unsteadily going toward the stall with sweet smell and we go back to shopping. While she seems reliable, she is still a child after all.

"Wonder what's available for the clothings~? The materials are from linen or cotton huh~ Uwa, there are clothes from knitted grass too! Everyone, what kind of clothes do you like?"

Pochi and Tama are at loss. These girls have never choose their clothes before. I have custom ordered a clothes only once when I was still with my tribe, but beside that I normally got used clothes from other people. She probably comes from a wealthy family.

"I don't mind what kind, as long as it's wearable. Since I'm fighting with spear, a sturdy clothes would be good."

"I see, let's look for a clothes for warrior that looks cute! I'm burning!"
"Burning~"
"Nano desu~"

I think it doesn't need to be cute, but not only Arisa, Poch and Tama look happy too. They're probably swept apart by the atmosphere.

"This, how about this one piece? The chartreuse green color is quite pretty, and this cuff's decoration is cute too~ Furthermore the back is open, so when you brush your hair up, you can seduce a man with one blow~."
"Arisa, I'm happy that you're looking clothes for me, but I'm picking this tunic and pants. It looks easy to fight with and the fabric is thick so it'll last long."

She seems to dislike my choice, Arisa scratch her head which is covered with mantle. Putting us demi-human aside, why is a human like her hide her head with mantle? It's mysterious.

In the end, besides Arisa, everyone bought two sets of tunics and trousers, and a one piece recommended by Arisa.

"Arisa, we're satisfied with just one set of clothes. I don't want to waste master's money..."
"It's not a waste! If we dress too poorly, we're disgracing master! There's no need for flashy clothes, but we do need the the change of clothes!"

Arisa firmly declares. A girl from the same race of master insisting to this far. It surely is necessary then.

We bought from 4 stalls, and as one would expect, 15 pieces of clothes are bulky.
Since it wasn't going to fit on the bag, we bought rucksacks for each person

to hold their own shares. Of course I'm carrying the shares of Lulu, who's sleeping in the inn.

We spent 4 silver coins and 2 big copper coins so far. Is it alright for slaves to spend this much money?

◇

"Next, it's shoes~."
"Shoes~?"
"We have shoes no desu."

Tama tilted her head, Pochi pointed at her own sandals-wearing feet.
It's not limited for slaves like us, even normal poor citizens don't wear shoes.

"Don't you think spare shoes is a bit too luxurious?"

We're spending large amount money like it's normal. I'm afraid that it's too extravagance. I don't mind if I'm punished, but when I think that master would be disgusted of me, my heart freezes.

"If you use your body to fight, then sandals is dangerous you know? Boots or at least shoes from thick leather is better."

"Our skins are sturdy, so it will be fine."

Arisa shocks her head.

"Biting insect, and among them some have poison, creatures like that exist. If your soles got injured, even if you're a hero, you could still die! Therefore, we should buy shoes."

She is push-fully going to the store, but the shopkeepers refuses.
Arisa tries to force through, but the shopkeeper doesn't seem that he's going

to compromise.

"Why can't we!"
"Who want to touch demi-human foot! These guys are just right barefooted. You're obstructing my business, go away!"

Since he's going to thrust away Arisa, I lift her from behind. The shopkeeper's fist hit my stomach, but the power is too weak, it doesn't hurt at all.

After spending time in labyrinth together with master, it seems that I've become strong.

If allowed, I would like to fight in the labyrinth with master again. That frog's grilled meat was delicious ...No, this isn't for the sake of grilled meat at all. I was happy to be helpful in the labyrinth.

◇

"Now then~ I've pulled myself together, next is general goods!"
"Goods~."
"Goods nano desu~."

I wonder if Pochi and Tama understand what general goods are...

"Arisa, what kind of things are we buying? If it's tablewares or cookwares then we have it to some extent."
"Is that so~ then, let's omit things that I have and unlikely to be needed."

Arisa is citing the goods as if singing.

"I wonder what's available~ comb, hand-mirror, cup, flask, sewing needles, threads, cloth scissor, towel, pen and ink, and paper, I guess."

"Arisa, isn't hand mirror too expensive? Beside, what do you want the sewing

kit and writing tools for?"

"Writing tools are a request from master. The sewing kit is going to be used by me. Since I was a self-sufficient cosplayer back then, even without skills, I could use sewing kit~ I could even make cute underwear and period-related clothing~."

We've finished gathering general goods from various shops, but we didn't buy hand-mirror in the end. Hand-mirror was exactly 3 silver coins. Even after Arisa tried to haggle it, it's still over our budget.

She readily gives up on buying the scissor and needle, but she only gives up on the hand mirror after terribly hesitating about it.

◇

"Alright, mission complete~ Next is the long-awaited snacks~"
"Snacks~ Meat~."
"Meat~ Nano desu~."
"Even though we've just had breakfast in the morning, we're having another meal?"

I thought meals are only for morning and evening, is it different for her? Certainly we had many meals in the labyrinth, but that was special occasions to recover our strength that had been sapped by continuous fights.

"Sweets are needed for cultural life!"

Master has allowed it, let's not oppose it too much.
Even while we're choosing foods from the stalls, she didn't forget to pick fruits for Lulu. Since Lulu seems to be her big sister, she's a good little sister who thinks of her sibling.

"Everyone, what do you want to eat?"

"Meat~!"
"Meat!"
"Meat is nice."

Arisa becomes to look a bit disappointed.
I think there is nothing more delicious than meat, is it different for human race?

"What kind of meat?"
"The one with skewer~"
"Meat stick on bones nano desu~"
"I'd like roasted bird's leg meat."

After listening to our opinions, Arisa declares.

"Alright, since the budget is aplenty, let's go in turn~."

After that, it's the time of bliss. With moderate salt and oil, brimming with good smells, the grilled mountain mutton meats, I don't understand which kind is it, but it's meat attached to bone having chewing texture out of this world, it taste a bit like grilled chicken meat. Meat is wonderful after all.

Lastly, I tried eating the sweet paste recommended by Arisa, but it's inferior to meat. Human race sense of taste is different after all?

Even before I became a slave, I could only eat meat during a festival and it was fish meat. When I think about it, I'm lucky to be master's slave.

4-3. Miscellaneous Matters and Flags

Satou's here. Do you feel like you're dancing at someone's palm?

I feel like Son Goku from Saiyuki...

◇

"What's the matter? Master, your back is slouching you know~?"

My thought which has been going in circle stopped, Arisa is standing carrying large luggages.

"Your tummy hurt~?"
"Hurt no desu?"

I turn my line of sight to the direction where my robe is pulled, there Pochi and Tama are looking worryingly while crouching near my feet.
Liza calmly stands, but her worries are transmitted here.

"I'm okay, I was just tired after being so busy for the past two days."

I pat Pochi's and Tama's heads.
I'm really disqualified as an adult for worrying these girls. Just by thinking so, the guilt and fear that had been weighting on my mind just before disappear like fallen tides.

...I check the Log just in case any message pops up but there's none.

I really should talk with Arisa tonight. I whispered to Arisa, "Tonight, after Lulu is sleeping, spare some of your time", but, "Eh~ aren't you falling too fast?", an answers full of misunderstanding comes out. I will take that as an OK for now.

When I ask for the result of the shopping, Pochi and Tama happily begin to take out clothes from the bag, I stop them. It has been decided to check them after we get back to the inn.
Liza apologizes for spending too much, but I tell her that it's necessary expenses, so don't think about it.

Even with current pace of spending money, counting only the Shiga Kingdom's currency I have, it'll take 2-3 years before it's dried up, so there's nothing to worry.

On the way back to the inn, I'm listening to Arisa and the girls' experience in shopping. Pochi and Tama talk about their first time shopping in glee from beginning to the end, they're telling me how fun it was.
I suggested Liza to let me carry half of the luggages and Lulu's clothes, but she gently refused.

◇

Just before the inn, I'm seeing a familiar back. She's walking a bit unsteady. Martha-chan and the helper girl from the inn are carrying a bunch of firewoods.

"Martha-chan, are you returning from errands?"
"Ah, Satou-san. Is the date over already?"
"Unfortunately, Zena-san had works in the afternoon."

While we're talking, I take some of the firewoods from Marth-chan and the girl. It may be their errands but our destination is the same. It's fine to take it by half.
Liza tries to take it, but I refuse because both her hands are occupied. Pochi and Tama are saying "Give here~" too, but there is no point taking it from little girls just to give it to another little girls, so they give up.

It's not really heavy, although it's at least 2-3 kilos. It's unreasonable for two young girls to carry two bundles of this each. They usually have it delivered

but, it seems that today the amount is not enough for training so they went to purchase it.

We enter the courtyard from the back door near the stable. I put the firewood bundles on its place.

>[Carriage Skill Acquired]

"Thank you~ Satou-san. Thanks to you, we're saved~"
"Thank you very much, guest-san."
"Don't worry about it."

Martha-chan goes to the kitchen with one bundle of firewood. The helper girl, her name is Yuni. I decided to observe Yuni who's going to take care horses of other guest.
I know that there are horses from yesterday, but I've never seen how horses are taken care, so I'm interested. This is not at all an escape.

Yuni is standing on top of a stool, and doing her best to make her small body reach the horses to brush them. I offered to help, but she said that she would get scolded by the innlady if she let a guest helps her.
After hiding their luggages on the space below the straws, Pochi and Tama come back. Pochi and Tama start helping Yuni. Liza tells me that they've helped in the night and morning too. Is it okay to get the help if it's Pochi and the girls?

Seeing the three little girls doing their best to care for the horse, I feel like a parent who came to an athletic meet to cheer for his children, I'm healed.
The little girls become 4 before I knew it, but Arisa doesn't look like she's motivated.
"Since the clothes which I've just bought will be dirty~" so she says while showing town-girl-like clothes under her mantle.

"Liza, I'm going to the temporary military post to get the spear and magic core money, do you want to come along?"
"Yes, I will accompany master."

"Me too! I'm going too!"

Pochi and Tama stop helping and run here.
"You going somewhere~?", "You go nodesu?", saying as they're coming, but since we would likely become an annoyance if we all go, I tell them to continue helping.
"Ay!","Nano desu~", and so they go back to work while carrying the horse's fodders. I wonder why they look mysteriously happy?

◇

"How is Lulu's condition?"
"She seems to be alright. I've given her change of clothes and underwear, so if you go now you could get to see lucky lewd scenes you know~?"

I knock on Arisa's head for saying stupid things. Are you really half sister of that girl?

"Let's stop for a bit~."

I declared that and go to the Worker Guild.

"Hello Nadi-san."
"Ara, welcome Satou-san. You're together with a cute girl today."

As we entered, Nadi-san greeted courteously from the other side of the counter. There's also an old man, which seems to be the shopkeeper, but he always sleep whenever I come. Does he even work?

I talk to Nadi-san for a request to deliver mementos of the deceased.
Rather than a suspicious guy like me, this town's person like Nadi-san would be better to deliver them. By the way, I tried asking the officials at the temporary military post but I was flat out rejected. Because I conveyed the deceased name and rough figures, she should be able to contact the bereaved

families.

"Do you also want me to collect the remuneration on your behalf?"
"Come again? What remuneration?"

After conveying the information about the deceased to Nadi-san who willingly undertake the delivery, I hear some strange things.
It seems that she wanted to know if she's also to act as an agent for receiving the rewards for delivering mementos. I'm just being a busybody so I don't really need rewards...

"Then how about only receive the reward if the family is rich? People like those will get suspicious you're aiming for something if you deliver the mementos without asking rewards."

So it become like that. It was decided to give the worker guild the maximum limit of the fee.

"Nadi-san, I have another matter to ask..."

Since I intend to buy or rent a house, I ask for the market price. In the end, I didn't ask for the intermediation though, and it's not because I can't afford it. Nadi-san says, "There are a lot of people who dislike living in neighborhood with demi-human, of course this applies in the inner wall, but even in the west district, I don't think anyone would sell you a house. You could find it in the east street if you look for it, but since the public order is bad, if a prosperous person like Satou-san comes to live in, then thieves would attack you on the next day without a doubt.", so I was informed.

◇

"Please sign this transaction document. The expense for appraising the spear has been deducted from the paid amount. The spear's safety has been verified so you can bring it to the town, but please take care as not to give demi-

human the weapon."

I sign the document presented by the official, and receive the spear back. I wrap the spear with cloth I brought.

The price of the magic cores is 17 silver coins. The appraisal fee is 2 silver coins, I wonder if that's a proper amount? Honestly, I think you can live just being an appraiser.
Just by going to the labyrinth with 4 of us in a day, we earned 6 Arisa... Wait, that unit is funny. It wouldn't be able to afford skill holder or knowledgeable slaves but if it's for labor slaves then it's plentiful.
If I distribute it for 4 then with our current living expense, it's enough for half a month...

"Eh~ Labyrinth is quite profitable~."
"You're risking your life though."

Arisa who was quiet inside the temporary military post began to cheerfully talk as soon as we got out. Her eyes is literally shining.

"Hey, Master, can you listen to me? Do you want to settle down in this town?"
"No, I don't have such intention."

Since we'll be obstructing people on the entrance, we're talking while continue walking.

"But, but, weren't you going to buy a house just a while ago?"
"I don't want to keep Liza and the girls stay in the barn so I was thinking of buying one but it seems to be impossible~"

Liza was going to say something but lost the moment to Arisa's vigor.

"The lover-san earlier is your local wife?"
"Don't say that unpleasant words Though I do want to get closer, she's not my lover. We've met only 3 days ago you know?"

<TLN:He's talking about local wife part>.

"Then~ I want to go to labyrinth city!"

Arisa declares while raising her hands and posturing with her entire body that it almost feel like she's letting out SFX.
Labyrinth again.

"Labyrinth city that mean there's a labyrinth there isn't it? Don't you feel repulsed to it?"
"Uuun, certainly unpleasant memories feel like they're going to resurface but more importantly! I want to raise my level!"

This isn't a game.
No, precisely because this is not a game that she'd want to level up.

"What do you want to do after you level up?"
"It's going to be demon lord season soon, so I want to level up in order to survive! While I'm at it, I want to raise magic skill that could be used to solve the Geass too."

Demon lord season, they're not cabbages and eggplants you know...
Since it was such a ridiculous phrase, I carelessly pay no attention to it.

4-4. Flea Market

Satou's here. Doing trial and error is the most fun time I ever have.
Although it's depressing when there are too many errors...

◇

"You could die before you could raise your level."
"It's alright, I have plenty of safety margins prepared."

I ignore Arisa who keeps talking in high spirit, and ask for Liza's thought.

"Liza, do you want to go to the labyrinth city too?"
"I will go to wherever master go to."
"I'm grateful for your deep loyalty, but I'd like to hear Liza's opinion. Since I will still be the one who make the final decision, please tell me your honest feeling without refraining."

Listen to subordinate's opinion and implement them as it is ⇒ If it fail, blame the subordinate, I won't be like that. I've decided not to be like that when I was in subordinate's position on my work. Don't impose absurd assignments!

"I would like to go to the labyrinth city if permitted."

"Hey~ I'm having a good speech here, listen~"
"I'll listen to you later."
"Che~, you're treating me differently than Liza-san~"

I ignore Arisa who becomes a bit sulky.
If we go to the labyrinth city, the advantages are as follow, Liza and the girls could go around freely, the discrimination would be minimized (it probably won't disappear), and Arisa and the girls could raise their levels.
The disadvantages are... None? Nono, I'll be parting with people I'm acquainted in this town, like Zena-san and Nadi-san. She worried about me

so much, while here I'm thinking such cold-hearted thing.

"Well, I have no intention of settling down in the labyrinth city, but it could be nice to go on a tour there."
"Tour... This isn't like our original world."

Isn't it fine? Different world tour.

"Rather than that, where is this labyrinth city located?"
"I don't know?"

Oy, princess.

"Wait, don't look at me with those eyes. I do know that it is on Shiga Kingdom, but I don't know the exact location."

Should I buy some simple map from the bookstore? My map only display the wilderness from back then and Seryuu city, so it's unusable for this case. I'm not entirely sure of this but it probably could display the whole area only if I've been there first.

"Master you don't have horses or a carriage right?"
"Nope."
"I wonder where they're selling it?"

Since the square near the gate has an area full of big stables, I'll ask there. Usually I would ask Nadi-san, but I've just tasked her with a request earlier, so she's probably not available now.

"Since you can afford a house then you must be able to afford horse and carriage, but for the sake better journey, let's look for hidden treasures for traveling expenses!"

Arisa points at a flea market. This girl sure has an iron heart. Even after she was thoroughly ignored, she's not discouraged.

The flea market is open on the place where the slave auction was held yesterday, on the widest square of the east district.
The slave traders' carriages and tents remain as they were, but the stalls that were selling sake and foods in the midnight are gone, in their places, dozens of merchant open their business showing various junks lined up on a space about as small as a desk. There might be more than 100 of them.

"Master, I have a request before we charge ahead."
"I'll listen for once, what is it?"
"I want permission to use two magics. They're <<Sense Magic Wave>> and <<Sense Evil>>."

After she explained the effect of those magics, I give her permission. The former is a magic to "Somehow" able to discern magic tools and the latter is to recognize someone who is approaching with malicious intent.
Since there doesn't seem to be any particular harm, I allow her. Of course I could do it myself even if I don't let her, but I'm not the kind of a person who like to prohibit anything and everything.

"This! This is surely a find!"

The tool that Arisa proudly proclaim is a magic tool for sure, a broken one according to appraisal. The name of tool is [The Invitation of the Dream Flies in the Moonlight Night], that questionable name come up, and the appraisal result is [▲ ▲ ▲ but ●●● in order to □□ did ●▲ playing ● namagu]. As usual, description of this world's magic tools feels like harassments. The shape itself looks like a musical instrument or a music box, but the decorations are obscene so it's probably a lewd tool.

"It looks like it's broken, so no."

I go out of the stall while the shopkeeper promote the tool as a work of art, and we look around other stalls. It's fun to go around stalls in this kind of flea market.

Because I see the same short wand I bought back then for less than half the

price, I bought two of them. After I bought it, I realized that it was a waste of money... but it could eventually be useful for something.

Other things are ornamental strings to tie Pochi's and Tama's short sword sheath to their belts, I also buy tassel decoration for Liza spear. Each of them only cost several copper coins.
In typical RPG, leather products are usually expensive, strangely, from what I've heard from the nii-chan shopkeeper, in this season they kill a lot of goats who don't hibernate, so they stock up a lot of leather products making it cheaper.

Because prices are considerably cheaper on flea market, it's harder to shop than on normal stalls.

I didn't forget to buy a ribbon as a souvenir for Lulu. It's a pink colored ribbon about 50cm long. The color is lighter than the stole Zena-san bought this morning. I wonder if the dye come from this neighborhood?

A lot of suspicious medicines are being displayed, but according to appraisal skill, they are just fake energy drinks with no effect. I'm interested with the energy drink part, but since the skill doesn't tell me the ingredients, I refrain.

They're also selling soap and pomade among other hair products. I'm not buying the pomade because the smell is too strong, but even though the soap is an expensive item for this market and as much as one big copper coin, I buy it without hesitation since it has nostalgic scents of milk soaps. I only want to buy one but Arisa desperately pleas, "This is good stuff!", I ended up buying all seven of the stocks.

"Master~ this! Buy this~."

The thing that Arisa offered are... glasses. Since these don't have lens, it's just a frame.

"What do you want this for? This kind of thing."
"Of course it's for master to use! There aren't enough glasses boys in this

fantasy world!　This is the first step to bring the fetish to this world~~~~."

I give a chop to Arisa who started to scream incomprehensible things to silent her. The shopkeeper says that it's one silver coin, but I don't buy it of course.

◇

The neighbor stall has cards-like... Isn't that Karuta. From appraisal, it's an item passed down from the ancestor of Seryuu city's earl from ancient Yamato era. It's not a magic tool but it seems to be under effect of fixture magic. The market price is 10 gold coin.

"Onii-san, you have discerning eyes~ This is a toy from the ancient empire."

Arisa interrupts, "Eh~ How do you play it?", while looking playful.

Ignoring the shopkeeper who start spouting some random things, I'm fascinated with the pile of papers in front of me. There are five 30cm thick stacks of book and papers tied with string, among them one is worth 100 gold coins. It's abnormal compared to the other bundles which are only valued for about one big copper coin each.

"How much is that toy?"
"It's 3 gold coins, but for the cute young lady here, I'll give you 7 silver coins, how about it?"

I pretend to be interested with Karuta and listen to him. Its asking price is about 1/7 of the market price. I could get some profit if I resale it, but it's bothersome to look for the customers.
Arisa loses interest after hearing the price. She seemed to have wanted it because it's nostalgic, but it seems that she didn't really want it to that much.

"It's a bit expensive. How about these bundles of papers, are they some kind of reading material?"

"They don't have any value, but since they're made of papers, burning it would be wasteful, so I'm selling them in bundles."

I casually enter into the topic with the shopkeeper.
It seems that it was disused things from when he was sorting things for a certain wealthy person. He wanted to sift through usable books to be sold later, but found out that most of them are just paper useful only for scribbling.

"How much is it? It looks like most papers are writable on both sides, so it should be able to be used for the children's writing practice."
"Right then, I'll give you one bundle for 3 copper coins. If you buy them all then I'll make it 2 big copper coins."

I decided to buy them all. I'll have the unnecessary papers for Lulu and the girls to learn letters.
I put the papers to the pouch from the bag and give it to Liza. I was going to carry half, but Liza refused.

"Customer, if you want to teach letters, how about you use this item here?"

He shows me cards with Shiga kingdom's vocabularies, while the back sides are drawn with the picture of the corresponding letters. The picture is monochrome but since the lines are highlighted, you can understand how to write it. On the [Water] card, I don't know what's drawn on it, but there are only a few like that.
1 set consist of 100 pieces. They're written with ink pen one by one. It must have been made with enormous effort, but the market price shows that it's only 1 silver coin.

"Those are some interesting cards."
"This is something that I thought myself, I was thinking of using it to teach the children in my hometown."

From what he said, it was originally made from wood wastes and ink. He thought that it would sell well so he earnestly asked a painter acquaintance to

make one set, and he promoted it heavily to the chamber of commerce but the production cost and the selling price were too lop-sided. It seems that the production cost 4 silver coins while chamber only want to pay 1 silver coin for it.

"So this was all drawn one by one?"
"Yes, of course it was..."

Won't the cost become cheaper if you use printing?
Arisa stops me. She puts her forefinger on her mouth.

"What?"
"Weren't you trying to suggest printing?"
"Yeah. ...Anything wrong with it?"
"When I was in the castle, I've never seen printing. It's dangerous to carelessly introduce technology you know?"
"Even though there's casting, they don't know printing?"
"Technology seems to be something like that."

Arisa who had failed once insists, I'll stop suggesting the printing.
I apologize to the shopkeeper for having private talk during the negotiation.

"I'm sorry, it was a difficult story to tell."
"I'm sorry too, even though there are only few people who are interested with this..."
"I want to buy 1 set, how much is it?"

So the interest was low? Even though that it could be popular.
He cites 4 silver coins. That's the production cost.

"Is it fine? Then won't you not profit from this?"
"It's fine. If I can give this product to a person who understand its worth."

I'm a bit moved with his melancholy.
It's a good idea, it would be a shame if it just fade away.

"Why don't you think the way to produce them next time? Since there should be demands, you could think about the price afterward. You could look for cheap material, or a way to mass produce them cheaply, it's fun to do various trials and errors."

I thought that he would think that it's just some needless words of the customer during the payment, but maybe because he found a fellow who understand him as an inventor, his eyes start to regain its strength, after confirming that, I go toward other stalls.

4-5. Flea Market (2)

Satou's here. Man who tries to scam with get-rich-quick scheme has the same atmosphere even in different world, I wonder why?

In the first place, in this world, having scam skill is enough to get you arrested...

◇

The Radar which has only been displaying white dots until now, suddenly shows a lone red dot.
It's near.

The man pretends to stagger while plunging straight at me. His hands are holding a box wrapped in velvet cloth. A scammer, or should I say a fraudulent extortionist.

He's coming with a speed and distance that normally would be unavoidable, but I avoid it naturally.
From the surrounding's viewpoint, it probably looks like a man suddenly falls down on his own. The fact that, it is, but...

"Aaah! My heirloom's pot!"

He cried out loud, we cannot not get involved now.
After I avoided the man, I confirmed that Liza and Arisa had completely ignored the man and kept walking, properly following me. Seems that Arisa had also noticed it with her Sense Evil.

"Hey, you! Don't run away!"

The man holds the broken pot with one hand, and grabs me with the other. Matching the timing with when he grabbed me, I made him faint. The people

around should see it as if he fainted because he was too exasperated.
If I only have the Fighting skill then I wouldn't have been able to do it this smoothly, thanks to Abduction skill, I did it without being noticed.

I put the fainted man to the back alley carefully. Before we leave him, I check his status because he might have friends, but he doesn't belong to any criminal guild.
He will probably loses all his belongings before he wakes up, but at least he probably won't die.

"The security here really is bad~"
"Yeah, when I first went into the east district, the content of my purse was quickly got stolen."

Come to think of it, even though this is a district with bad security problem, there sure are a lot of shops with expensive commodities. Is the crime prevention all right?
I begin to worry about other people's problems.

When I observe more carefully, there are several people with good physiques, who clearly aren't merchants, strutting along the area.
Checking on AR, they are called East District Vigilante Corp, one of the watchdog guilds. It seems that several groups are guarding the area together.

◇

Right now we are in the area of the flea market focused on pottery. I buy a bottle with lid to put medicine and ointment. The bottle is not made of glass but bisque. This is the same thing as the one from the alchemy introductory set, but won't the medicine have chemical reaction?

That remind me, I've bought an alchemy set yet I've never read the book even once.

A crowd is formed a bit in front of us.
"I wonder what~" Arisa says while briskly goes into the crowd, she comes back after a while with a bored face.

"What was it?"
"Since they said that it's a magic tool, I expected something good... but it's just a spinning top which moves after you pour it magic power. Furthermore it's 1 gold coin much, those people are also crowding just because they're curious."

What did you say?

"How did he pour the magic power?"
"There's a magic apparatus-like part on the disk section which he uses to directly put the magic power by hand, when he releases his hand the tool begins move. What? Are you interested with that toy?"

I leave Arisa who elatedly call me "Childish", and head toward the crowd.
When the demonstration is finished, the crowd disperses.
According to Appraisal, the thing put on the stall is called [Rolling Ring].
Since the description is like usual, I don't read it. The disk diameter is about 20cm, it's big for a spinning top. The market price is 2 gold coins.

Some children pester the shopkeeper to spin the disk again but he refused since he has no magic power left.

"Hello, if you're fine with it, I could pour the magic power for you."
"My bad nii-san. Hold the disk with both of your hands, then circulate magic power from your right hand to your left. Blue line light will lit on the disk after a bit, you can stop pouring magic power then and gently place the disk on the stand."

It's completely filled after I pour 2 MP.
Looking at Timer, I release it after I found the right time.

The AR displays the number of rotation when I stare at the disk.
It's doing 600 rotations per 10 minute. Moreover the spinning speed is constant until it run out of magic power. Depending on its torque, it could be useful for a lot of things.

Some people who are interested like Arisa earlier are coming, but soon go away after hearing the price.

"Shopkeeper-san, I want to try something. I will buy it if it broke, so will you let me?"
"If possible, I'd like you to buy it before you break it..."

What the shopkeeper is saying is a matter of course, but maybe because couldn't sell it at all, for even the tiniest possibility of selling it, he allows me.

I ask Arisa to put her magic into the disk. It consumes 5 MP this time. Are there differences between individuals?
The rotation speed is the same as earlier. I press the spinning disk from both sides after 3 minutes has elapsed. The children are booing, but I ignore them.
The rotation is surprisingly strong. It has about the same power as a radio controlled motor.

>[Experiment Skill Acquired]
>[Verification Skill Acquired]

After I take out gold coins, the shopkeeper readily tell me the maker since he has nothing to lose. It seems that it's the work of Jahad, an old magician from the royal capital.
Seems that he's famous for creating useless magic tools.

I buy 4 for 1 gold coins. It looks useful for a lot of things.

"You, such things "Arisa You're being rude to master."

Arisa is rebuked by Liza. She was unreserved with me all this time but it seems that [You] is unacceptable.

<TLN: Okay, this might sound confusing but Arisa is using [Anta] to call Satou up there, it's informal and slightly rude version of "you" in Japanese. She actually never directly call Satou with "you" pronoun before, she alway use master when she does and not use personal pronoun at all in a lot of her dialogs with Satou but English language doesn't allow that (well, I could but it would sounds just strange with lots of passives) so I used "you" carelessly before this chapter (although it's not exactly wrong, it's not exactly right either, so confusing)

For more information: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_pronouns>
"U~ I'm sorry master."

Arisa is unusually obedient.
Because Liza's anger has force. I'm glad that she is usually mild-mannered.

"Then, what did you want to say?"
"Rather than toys, I want master to buy me magic books."
"I have books for Life magic, do you want it?"
"I'd like something more useful for battle!"

Yup, I could understand the lament of the Life magic author for a bit.
I want a recovery magic user from the present members.
I promise to bring her along when I go buy map. I think that the magic shop is still closed now, but she still insists.

◇

"Young master, could I have your time for a bit?"

I didn't think that I was the one who got called, but when I ignore the caller, he looks troubled.
He looks like a gentlemen from the outside, but his eyes are like snake.

"Can I help you with something?"

"Does young master familiar with an alchemy material called Dragon White Stone?"
"No, I'm uneducated with it."

The gentleman keeps talking with exaggerated grieving gestures.

"I think you might know this but in making antidote, one need different materials for each type of poison."

"However, this Dragon White Stone, processed with alchemy, could be used to cure all type of poison!"

"Of course, if you live normally, then you probably won't ever get poisoned."

"Yet, for Explorers who enter labyrinth, they don't know when they will encounter monster with poison so antidote is necessary."

"But, for the sake of bringing the loots back, Explorers are compelled to bring as little supply as possible."

"Therefore, antidotes made from Dragon White Stones are traded at high price in labyrinth city."

Without letting me cut into it, he had begun a solo sales talk.
I've been ignoring it, so I want him to just get to the point.

"This Dragon White Stone, especially! Especially for the young master (...), I'll give you special price for it!"

In short, you want me to buy the Dragon White Stone because it's selling well in labyrinth city, that was long just for this.

"I understand the story now, but why don't you go to the labyrinth city yourself?"
"That's what should have been but I must go to the south after this. Therefore, I will hand it over to young master who overflows with business talent."

On what basis is he saying that I'm overflowing with business talent?
Beside, he should sell it to a firm rather than an individual in a place like this.
Suspicious, doubtlessly.

"This is a sample, I also have the certificate."

He takes out a pebble sized item, it's a Dragon White Stone according to appraisal. I still don't know if this is really an ingredient for cure-all antidote.
I want reverse look-up too.
The market price for that size is 1 copper coin.

I try to properly decline it, but the sham gentleman strongly press on it. I can't separate away easily.
In the end, we decided to go to his carriage to look at the stocks.

On top of the carriages, clusters of very small rocks wrapped in waterproof cloth are put.
The sham gentleman pulls the cloth to show off the white rocks(...) and continues the sales talk.
I see a person, who's just right for this, coming here. Let's drag him into this.

"How is it, this quality here. If you bring this to the labyrinth city then it's going to worth close to 100 gold coins. Because of the brilliance shown by young master, I will hand it over."

"Unfortunately I don't have 100 gold coins on hands. At most, I only have 20 gold coins."

The sham gentleman looks slightly bitter. But I saw the corner of his eyes moving slightly.

"This is difficult, If it's 30 gold coins then I would've yielded..."

"Is that so, too bad. Well then, let's end this talk here."

And so I pull straight away.
The sham gentleman hurriedly get back.

"No, let's count on the future of young master, I will yield for 20 gold coins this time, for investment."

Ignoring the sham gentleman, I call the gnome who's passing through on the side. It's the manager of the alchemy shop.

"Hello manager-san"
"The heck are you?"
"I'm the beginner who bought the alchemy set in your shop the other day."
"Oh yeah, how's your training?"
"Yes, It's still quite difficult."
"Well yeah, it's not something that could be done overnight."

"Right manager-san, this gentleman here is trading something called Dragon White Stone. How about stocking some for manager-san's shop?"

Saying so, I point at the lumps of rock salt(...) on the carriage. That's right, the sham gentleman scam tactic is by first showing the real Dragon White Stone pebble to someone and then sell rock salts as the real thing.

"What are you saying, those are rock salts."
"Eeeeh~! So those are rock salts!"

I exaggeratedly act surprised and say "What is the meaning of this!", sending the fraud into panic.
If he run away, then I thought of letting him go but the manager's bodyguard with big body quickly constrict the fraud and drag him away.
You guys are too quick...

"I got dragged into a boring farce."

The manager looks truly indignant.

"Thanks for your help."
"Fuhn, you bastard must've known it from the start with appraisal. Just when I went to flea market for finding bargain on raw materials, I was made to dispose small peon instead."

To soothe him, I tell him about the thing with spinning top earlier, after hearing that he leaves me alone and quickly goes to that stall.
He probably got an idea to use it for mixing materials.

4-6. Carriage and Coachman

Satou's here. I do have a driver license but I have never actually drive for years.
As a man who lived in the center of the city, I was already satisfied with the public transport.
Although if I had my own car, it'd had been convenient in a date...

◇

"We only have horse-carriage cabs here. If you want to buy a carriage then order it on the merchant guild inside the inner wall."

I tried talking to the people on the stable areas near the gate, but they didn't sell it there. Is this like trying to buy a car in a taxi stand? I'm a bit ashamed.

"The merchant guild should have them if you're fine with used one. They were looking for buyers if I'm not mistaken."

A different coachman interrupts while we were talking.
I thank him, then I ride on his carriage cab to the merchant guild. I asked Arisa and Liza to carry the luggages back to the inn.

◇

The coachman who has escorted me to the merchant guild kindly mediates with the guild for me.

"We don't usually sell to people outside of merchant guild member, but since you're introduced by Yosagu-san, let's make an exception."

Yosagu is the coachman's name. It doesn't really matter, but the merchant

here is Sunifun-san.
He shows me two carriages. One of them is a covered wagon. The inside is about 4 tatami wide I think? The other one is a box-shaped carriage. It's about 2 meter high, and with a luggage space on the ceiling. The width inside is the same.
The covered wagon is 10 gold coins. The box-shaped carriage is 30 gold coins. The box-shaped carriage is more robust and safer, but you will need 4-6 horses to pull it. The covered wagon depends on its load, if the load is light then you only need 1-2 horses.

I wanted the safe one so I was going to buy the box-shaped carriage, but I'm told that since the center of gravity is tall, the operation of the carriage is difficult, so I stopped.
I have a car license, but driving a carriage? Since I don't have any experience on it, let's proceed carefully.

I ask to be shown the inside before buying. The inside of the covered wagon is, how do I say it, normal. Under the seat for coachman, there's a hidden space for valuables. It seems that it was remodeled by the previous owner.

"I'd like to buy this covered wagon, but could you also prepare the horses together?"

"Right, we could prepare two Gontsu horses from the guild for you. We could provide four if it's donkey, but depending on the load and the destination, they may not be suitable."

I tell him that the destination is labyrinth city and the load are 6 peoples and their necessities, he recommends the Gontsu horses for the task. If I carry heavy luggages then, even if it's slower, he says that donkeys are better.
If you want to be fast, then Shuberien horses are the ones you want but it seems that they all have been brought by the territory government.

The price for two horses and the wagon are 20 gold coins but I've managed to get it down to 18.
Sunifun-san is surprised to see me paying it fully and in cash.

Normally people will get the bill first, and pay at the later date. "I'm quite hasty, I used to get scolded by the people on my house because of it.", I use excuse as if I'm a son of a noble who's ignorant with the world.

"Satou-sama, since 6 people are going to the labyrinth city, it would be wasteful if you only bring an empty load."

Is that so?
Certainly, half of the space would be usable. Furthermore, me and Arisa also have plenty of storage capabilities.

"Do you have any products to recommend?"

"Right then, I think that crossbow and bolt would have demands in labyrinth city. Since the crossbows from Seryuu city are made to shoot Wyvern on the sky, its specs are higher than from other region so it would sell like hot cakes. Also, since it's currently cheap to procure goat leathers and furs due to the season, I think it would be easy to profit on it."

"Excuse me, do Satou-sama has commercial right?"
"Unfortunately, I do not."

So a permit is really necessary?

"That's unfortunate, we can only issue a permit for 10 gold coins."
"That's quite expensive."

"One doesn't need permit to do the trades in small quantity inside city, but if you enter a city without one then you won't be exempt from the tariff tax so the profit will be almost nil."

I see then I should put them inside the storage to avert the tariff...
But there's no reason to earn money illegally.

"If you don't go to other city then there's an item that is exempted from tax in

the labyrinth city, but since the tax for it in other cities is quite high, there's really no meaning to it."

"What kind of item is it?"

"Because there is no demand in this city, they don't have name here, but it's in constant demand in the labyrinth city. It's an alchemy material called Dragon White Stone."

I think my face shows it when I heard the name. Since Sunifun-san asks for it, I tell him about the fraud I met in the east district.

"I see, it's natural that you had such face. However, the ones here are guaranteed by the merchant association."

It seems that they sell one small barrel for 10 gold coins, the same as the market price. By the way, it seems that you could easily sell that amount for 20 gold coins in labyrinth city.
If I could sell it for twice the price then wouldn't I net quite a profit?
So I thought, but he said that because of the tariffs for the entering cities on the way and the transportation cost, the profit end up to be quite small.

"If the stones doesn't sell, then you can bring it to the merchant guild, they will buy it at the price you buy here. If you wish, we could make a letter of endorsement to guarantee the quality."

I was almost made to buy in large quantity, but I declined by saying that there won't be enough space for water and food if I bought to many.

I end up buying 6 small barrels of Dragon White Stone, 100 pieces of goat leather, 100 bundle of wool, 10 crossbows and 1000 bolts.

Because they're all 70 gold coins even after I lowered the price, I sign a temporary contract, and will pay for it tomorrow along with the products exchange.

◇

Right now, I'm riding the covered wagon outside the Seryuu city ...That said, it's not like we have departed.

After I had finished the business at the guild, outside, I asked Sunifun-san if he could introduce me to someone who could teach me how to operate the wagon. There, Yosagu-san who were waiting for me to return said, "Then let this old bone teach you.", and that was how the flow went.

As Yosagu-san starts to teach the basic of operating a wagon.

>[Marshaling Skill Acquired]

Like always, I allocate 1 skill point to it and activate it. ...So it wasn't included in Operation skill.

It's awkward, but I can control the wagon for once. During the practice, I raise the skill level by 1, it's not as high as Yosagu-san skill level at 3, but since I could already control the wagon fine, I stop raising the level.

"Young guy do learn fast isn't it."
"Thanks to Yosagu-san good teaching."

Disregarding the cheat from skill, Yosagu-san's teaching really is good. I had failed once but he firmly taught me what to be careful with. He might be suited to be an instructor.
Particularly when I treated it like a car, forgetting that the horses are creatures, he was mad many times...

"You're good enough like this."
"Thank you very much."

"Next I will teach you how to fix and release the yoke that connects the horse

to the wagon. The horse's fatigue depends on how good you are at this. If you value your horses, then don't cut corner on this."

Yosagu-san looks more serious than when he teach me to ride the wagon. He probably quite likes horses. After about 1 hour of strict training, I finally got a passing mark from Yosagu-san.

I thought that it had took a long time, but Yosagu-san said that one normally only scratch the surface in half a day, he's impressed.

Yosagu-san tells me that he was a coachman working for a caravan before he worked as a cab coachman in Seryu city. He teaches me various things like crossbows and spears are good for defending the wagon, or that I should always resupply drinking water at cities since they're not always available at the indicated spot on the map, or that when we take a break, I should not forget to give rock salt to the horse along with water.

◇

We're going to the merchant guild with the wagon. Since Yosagu-san's carriage is left on the guild, we're going there to fetch it.
During the way there, Yosagu-san talks about the brothels in Seryuu city. It seems that he's into big breasts.
As a thanks for teaching me various things, I've decided to luxuriously treat him at the shop he recommends, tomorrow evening. Since there are a lot of loli around me recently, this will be fun.

◇

Before returning to the Monzen inn with the covered wagon, I go to receive my clothes. I come just as the delivery, so I'm able to meet the rumored tailor. I feel like I know her face, then I realized that she's the bath tub partner (lol) I

met on the first day, it's embarrassing. It's surprising that she also remembers me, but there's no real development, and I thank her for the quality of her clothes as an etiquette.

◇

I ride the wagon into the courtyard of the Monzen inn. Martha-chan is just right at it, so I tell her that I've bought the wagon. Since there are rooms in the stable, seems that it's all right. However, I have to pay for the parking fee since it's a different charge from normal inn room.

"Wilcome home~?"
"Nano desu~."

When I'm talking with Martha-chan, Pochi and Tama run from the shade behind the courtyard. Tama probably wanted to say welcome. Two people also appear from the shade. The helper girl (Yuni) is also together with them. I wonder if she doesn't have prejudice against demi-human?

Arisa and the girls seems to have been playing in the shade of garden plants of the courtyard. No, that words isn't right. They're trying to learn the letters from the learning cards.

At first, it seems that Martha-chan is teaching, acting as the teacher.
But in the middle, "Let's put the card face up and read the letter, then if you can guess the content in the back right, it's yours to take.", Arisa proposed that game-like study session, but since the other members weren't familiar with the game, they became quite addicted to it.

It has already been continuing for two hours. The one who win the most is Arisa, followed by Pochi, Lulu, Yuni, Tama, and Liza in order.

I leave the horses for everyone else to take care, and bring only Arisa to the room. Lulu's expression becomes a bit cloudy, but I can just clear the

misunderstanding later.

4-7. Satou's Secret

Satou's here. I have finished doing self-analysis and self-development during the days of job hunting.

I'm reluctant to look back at it.

◇

I sit on the bed while putting the bag on the side.
Arisa is taking off her mantle as soon as she enters our bedroom, and when she started to take off her clothes too, I stop her with a chop to her head.

"Ouchie~ What, didn't you lust for me?"
"Let's decide that after 10 years."
"No way~ This is a chance to violate the precious body of a boy..."

While chattering pointlessly, Arisa still proceeds to wear her clothes back and sits on the opposite bed.

"You said something about consultation at noon right? Did anything happen?"
"Wonder where should I begin..."
"Why don't you tell me all about it? They said that the king has donkey ears~."
<TLN: http://www.worldstories.org.uk/stories/story/88-the-king-with-donkey-ears>

Doesn't that story end with everything coming to light?

"Then how about removing the thing that you don't want to say? Though I couldn't tell it to anyone anyway if you order me not to~."

"That's right..."

The disposable long-range skill that I had when I first got here? Then I change the story a little by only telling that it was used to annihilate each communities of scale tribes.
I speak in quite a firm tone, but Arisa wryly smiles for some reason.

"What's wrong, I'm not bragging you know?"
"I understand, but unique skill is our trump card, you should hide it properly."

"Sorry, I'll be careful."
"Then, what is the consultation about? Were those scale tribe communities members of Liza's race?"

Arisa listens while hugging her knee on top of the bed. Since her new skirt is long, I'm relieved that her underwear isn't visible.

Liza's tribe lived in wetlands far away from here, they were wiped out after a dispute with the weasel tribe many years ago, Liza told me the story during the frog grill party back then. It seems that she was kidnapped by the slave-hunting human when she was wandering with her family. She also said that she and her family were fearful with Dragon Valley so they didn't dare to get close to it.

"No, it's not that, it's just that even though I accidentally annihilated a whole tribe, I don't feel any guilt. I feel like the guilt was easily and completely turned off like an ON/OFF switch. As if someone is manipulating my heart..."

If I didn't almost got manipulated by Arisa, I probably wouldn't think of this either...

"They call this Paranoia in my old life! but that won't satisfy you, right"
"It's different from paranoia, it's as if the feeling of 『Guilt』 is vacuumed into closet... It's hard to explain."

"Fuh~n? Weren't you originally cold-blooded?"
"Since I was a programmer I do like to think efficiently, but I don't think I

was cold-blooded. When the game I made was made fun of (on the internet), I became depressed for days."
"Hee~ So you were a game developer? What kind of game was it?"

"I'll talk about it later. Rather than that"
"Do you want to know the cause for the ON/OFF switch feeling?"

Arisa who covered my words with hers, subtly smiles mischievously.

"Perhaps your MND (mental strength) attribute is too high?"
"It's certainly high but..."

"If your VIT (Durability) is high, you become able to take many hit right? MND is the mental version of that. In the first place, you're purposely letting yourself be tormented by guilt, unless you're a masochist, it should disappear fast."

Is that so?
I thought that it was someone's doing, but it was merely a problem of my stat...

◇

"Then the next."
"Ou ke~y, come at m~e"

Arisa is playing around, but it's reassuring to have someone to confide in like this.

"Based on the logic earlier, if I have high INT (Intelligence) then I should have good memory, yet I feel like I become extremely more forgetful than before. What is the meaning of this?"

"Uwah~ eh~, you have amnesia even being this young?"

I'm about to chop her but Arisa quickly takes a guard.
Because her flustered posture looks cute, I'll let this one slide.

"I'm joking, even though comprehension and memory do go up with INT, it doesn't mean that they go up equally. If high INT means that you can't forget then there wouldn't be any careless scholars right?"

No way...
My mentor was a professor extremely close to getting a Nobel prize. His careless episodes, like a revolving lantern, cross my mind.
<TLN: His or her, who knows? blame the kare>

"...That means, I was really just being paranoid?"

"Looks like it~."

Arisa throws herself onto the bed and laughs.

Speaking of which, I originally became paranoid because of this girl's mind magic attempt...
Even while thinking that, I'm not childish enough to utter it on my mouth.

◇

"Hey Arisa."
"What? Do you want to get sticky?"
"I'll refrain from that."

This girl really likes to utter one word too many.

"What are levels and skills in the first place?"
"Like the ones from RPG, as it is?"
"Any other meanings beside that?"

"I don't know. I didn't ask when I met god, and he didn't answer when I tried to call him after reincarnating."

"Just tell me as far as you know."
"Right then, I guess you can call skill a condensation of experience and knowledge? When you have skill, don't you feel that you 『Somehow』 know the what and how? Maybe it's close to intuition. For example, you could cook even without the skill, but if someone with high level skill cooks with the same ingredients and tools, he will make something more delicious."

I see... However, the appraisal and market price estimation skill are quite obvious though?
Also, 'that' is different too? I confirm it with Arisa.

"How about something like the contract skill, which clearly demonstrates its effect?"
"Well, contract skill is a kind of magic skill. It has chanting and it also uses magic power for the contract. But it's still basically the same as other skill you know? Even if you don't have the skill, you could still chant and use the contract spell if you have abundant magic power. However, like other magic skills, if you don't have the contract skill, the required magic power to cast the spell will be drastically increased and the success rate will sharply drop, making it realistically impossible."

I ask about skill level too.

"Here are the standards for skill level; level 1 is Beginner, level 3 is Full-fledged, level 5 is Skilled, level 7 is Expert, and level 9 is Genius. It is said that level 10 is Godly class~ but I've never seen it~."

Is that so, I generally raised my skills to level 10... No wonder I always got the market price right, and almost always succeed in haggling.

"Don't unique skills have level?"

"Nope. This was said by the god when I reincarnated, unique skill is a

fragment of god power so there is no level. Master it well, he said~"

A fragment of god power?
Certainly Meteor Shower is befitting of its name, but beside that the others are subtle.

"What?! What's with that subtle expression?"

"No well, when you said that unique skill is a fragment of god power, I thought that my unique skill sure is subtle...."

"Enough to make that subtle expression on your face?"

Although I don't have proof for this confidence, I decide to tell her about [Menu].
Despite her behavior and speech, Arisa seems reliable, she looks to be useful if I tell her.

I don't intend to tell her in detail. I'll just roughly tell her about the functions.

"I'm telling because my unique skill is Menu with the same performance as the one Arisa and the heroes have"
"Well, I will listen if you want, but it's better if you keep it a secret you know?"

Arisa advices me.

"I don't mind, however don't tell a word to anyone. This is an 『Order』."
"Okkey~ I'll bring it to my grave."

Arisa kneels on the bed, and haughtily taps her flat chest.

"My Menu has Self-Status, Status Check, Hide Skill and Inventory like Arisa's skills."
"As expected of unique skill, it's a cheat~ But Isn't it really common for a unique skill?"

"That's not all. Although I can choose to allocate point at which skill, I can't choose to do so for all skills like Arisa. It's only available for skills that I acquire by experience."
"Uwah, isn't it a degraded version of unique skill?"
"The Hide Skill from menu is superior. It can hide any skills."
"Looks like it~"

It seems that Arisa has guessed it.

"I mean, didn't you use Appraisal skill in the city? Your line of sight was unnatural, and your decision was too accurate~."

Th, this girl, is she an agent from somewhere?!

"I'm good at observing people. And you also have crisis sensing skill right? Although your movement with the accident faker was really great, it was amazing how you notice it in the first place."

"That's also part of the Menu. I can understand the position of people nearby with the radar display. There's also map display. It also has an auto-mapping function. It gradually fills in accordance to my walking range. It was a big help inside the labyrinth."

"I see, it's truly 『Menu』. Didn't you think that you were inside a game for having such unique skill without any explanation?"
"I thought that I was in a dream instead."

"Well, it's unbelievable I know~." Arisa nods understandingly.

◇

While we're at it, Arisa-sensei also teaches me about level.

"...That's why you can level up by fighting or studying, so anyway, if you actively learn new things you gain experience. When the experience reach a fixed value then your level will be raised. It seems that experience goes up faster if you fight certain monsters."

It seems that she heard about the monsters thing from the soldier and knight on her homeland.
It gave far more experiences compared to monster they normally hunted.

"Hoo? Do you know why?"
"Not at all, I've never fought a monster."

"But" Arisa continues.

"If it's master, then you should know right? From what I've heard from Liza and the girls, they raised 10 levels in 1 day in the labyrinth. That's higher than the result from my 7 years of desperate studies you know?"
"Certainly, it was an abnormal growth when you think about it."

"Isn't it~. That's why, in order to increase our survival chance, we should go to labyrinth city to level up~."

She said the same thing back at noon...
Come to think of it, she said another strange thing back then.

"By the way, what the heck is demon lord season?"
"I wonder if they don't call it that around here? In my country we call it for the season when the demon lord attack after about 66 years cycle."

4-8. Demon Lord Season

Satou's here. I love cherry blossom season.

The dancing falling petals, and the cheerful people welcoming new life.

I like how there are many fireworks too~

◇

"Demon lord you say, the kind that wants to rule the world?"
"Yes the one who wants to destroy the world."

"Where is it coming from?"
"I don't know, maybe hell?"

Hell huh~.

"Don't look at me with those eyes~ From what was written in the book, it's said that they're invaders from foreign world."
"Is foreign world different from another world?"
"I'm not a scholar so I don't know."

That's right huh, let's ask a scholar next time.

"Is that 66 years cycle thing true?"
"Yep, there are records where the demon lord appear a bit sooner or later, but they generally seem to appear in 66 years."
"So, it has almost been 66 years now?"
"It was 62 years ago since the last demon lord, but seems that it has been stealthily gaining power while in hiding. Since the demon lord before the last appeared 132 years ago, it wouldn't be strange if the current demon lord appears any day now."

Arisa frowns forming duck mouth. The beautiful little girl look is ruined.

"I see, any sign for its coming?"
"If the world is in crisis, the god will tell it to the oracle~."

As expected of fantasy.

"However if we wait for the oracle then there wouldn't be enough time to raise the hero, so around 3-5 years before the 66 years cycle, they summon the hero."

With that kind of period, it's no wonder that countries will have a lot of time in their hand to prepare.

"Do we know the location where the demon lord will spawn?"
"It seems that they mostly appear in labyrinths or the outskirts around it"

Labyrinth again...

"According to the book I read, it may be because it's easy for the demon lord to raise armies there since there are earth veins deep inside labyrinth."
"Couldn't it just attack head-on without raising armies?"
"Who knows? Maybe the cost to cross between worlds is great. This is based only from circumstantial evidence, but it seems that only high level demons and the demon lord are able to cross worlds."

So the weak can't cross between worlds?
Or rather, if they could appear in the vicinity of labyrinth then.

"Then, this Seryuu city is in danger too..."
"Absolutely not."

Arisa nods with serious look.

"You're very sure."
"Because, this place is close to the Dragon Valley right? If they appear in a

place like this, they will be exterminated by hordes of dragons. The legend even says that there's a Dragon God there."

"Are dragons and the demon lord in bad term?"
"They're natural enemies. Normal dragons wouldn't be a match for the demon lord but if it's from sub-divine class like heavenly dragon, then the dragon is stronger for sure."

Dragons are amazing.
The threat of demon lord should be resolved if we just put one heavenly dragon near the labyrinth but...

"If the dragons are that strong then why would they even bother summoning a hero from another world?"
"That's because~ The battle between dragons(.) and the demon lord(.) is too incredible. From songs sang by minstrel about the hero from long ago, there's a story where the hero is defeated by the demon lord. After that, the demon lord destroyed several small countries and met a dragon. The demon lord was defeated in the end but the battle made two great countries sunk into sea of flames. From the rumor said by the minstrel, even the large empire that preceded Saga empire perished because it got mixed up in the fight between the dragon and the demon lord."

I see now~ It's like eliminating a robber with a ballistic missile huh.

According to Arisa, there was once a labyrinth which the dragon encamped. However, from human's viewpoint, both dragon and demon lord were threats, so they made the hero at that time to fight it. It's unknown which one won, but it's known that there are no labyrinths encamped by dragons right now.

◇

The demon which appeared in Seryuu city might have come to check on the situation of the dragon.

If the fact that the dragons are no more then this city might become the target of the demon lord.
I bring the subject to Arisa.

"Even excluding the dragon, wouldn't it be 100 years before this city become a target?"
"Why?"
"The labyrinth is growing. It gives birth to monsters and sucks on the life of the adventurers who come seeking the magic core to grow. When the labyrinth vastly deepened, the monsters also become much stronger."
"I see... a young labyrinth isn't good enough for the demon lord."

Hmm? Wait...

"Hey, by any chance, are labyrinths tools for demon lord raid?"
"Well yes, there are some who think that."
"Then, isn't it better to destroy the labyrinth?"

If we destroy the labyrinth (Spawn Point) then the demon lord will have fewer army forces and the hero's job will get way easier isn't it?

"That may be so, but there are 6 labyrinths in this continent beside the one here. Suppose the probability of demon lord appearing in each labyrinth is equal, in 400 years, it was recognized as calamity whether or not it appeared. Furthermore, since the labyrinth produces usable materials like magic cores, people treat it as if it's a mine."

"I see, if we destroy it then people will hold grudges huh."
"Yes, Kubooku kingom was the leader of the small countries in neighborhood during the time when its labyrinth was alive, but when they destroyed the Dungeon Core, they rapidly declined."

"Could the destroyed Dungeon Core be revived?"
"Isn't that so? I wasn't around when they performed the ritual so I don't know the detail though."

So the labyrinth is appealing enough for people to even perform such an abominable ritual...
The saying that human greed knows no bounds is really true~

◇

"Still, you sure know a lot, Arisa."
"Now you're saying that after thoroughly questioning me?"

Arisa is amazed. I was sure that she would have said, "You can revere me more~", but if we have Arisa test, then she had failed.

"There were a lot of documents pertaining to the labyrinth in the storehouse of the royal family. The explanations earlier may contain deduction and hypothesis, so take heed okay?"

She's good at delivering flood of information. ...I'm nearly drowning from it though.

"I got the things about the demon lord and hero from books, documents, minstrels and storytellers' song tales. That's why the fiction and non-fiction may got mixed up. I did carefully examined it though~."

It seems that those were popular as entertainments.

"As for the details about skills and levels, they're from my own experience and the result of observation."

"Is that all you want to know?", she cutely tilts her head. Her figure is such that it would have stirred me with a craving to protect her if I didn't know her true nature.

"That's right, I forgot to ask anyone this, how many days is a year?"

According to Arisa, 1 year is 10 months, 1 month is 30 days. There is no concept of week, a month is divided by 3 part consisting of upper moon, middle moon and lower moon.

By the way I thought that my clock is off by 4 hours but now I know that one day is 28 hours here.
Compared to yearly unit, this world system is shorter for about 4%.

◇

Since there are still two hours before sunset, I ask Arisa and the girls to buy necessities for our journey.

"Then I'm counting on you to shop for rock salt and preserved foods. Also buy two barrels for water."

"Ye~s.", "Shopping~?", "Nano desu.", I received lively replies.

"For how many days of shares should we buy?"
"Buy the shares for 10 days. Considering the season right now, normal foods should be fine for the first 3 days. The preserved foods shouldn't expire for 240 days, is it about right? Seems that we would need quite an amount."
"I'll ask Martha-cchi if there is any wholesale shop around. And, since we probably wouldn't be able to carry it, I'll ask for delivery."
"Yeah, please do."

She's reliable at the time for shopping.

I'd be glad to accompany them, but I decide to go back to the room because there is something that I want to confirm.

◇

There's something that I didn't tell Arisa.

Dragons are natural enemies of demons.

Demons want to eliminate dragons.

Who summoned me to this world?

For what reason did I get summoned to this world?

Why do my power have discrepancies with those of the heroes?

Yes, I am,

"The one who summoned me might be the demon or the demon lord is it...."

Those words weren't questions...

4-9. Things That Could be Done Alone

Satou's here. The chemistry experiment during the days of junior school was such a fantastic time, wasn't it?

I also remember that there are differences between the thing I've learned in school and the actual practice.

◇

It's aggravating to be filled with bad imaginations with no way to prove it. Even if it's the truth, the heroes should win against the demon lord like how it usually goes. If they lose, then I'll take responsibility of defeating the demon lord in place of the dragons.

I take a deep breath several times and I'm becoming calm.
Having high MND (Mental Strength) surprisingly has its merit.

◇

I come back to my room. Returning to the main subject.
I want to do further verification and alchemy. Since the chanting practice need to be done steadily, I have no choice but to do it on the way to the labyrinth city.

First, let's verify the storage.

I take out the meal.
It's still warm.
I lightly bite it. The taste is still the same.

I put back the remaining meal to the storage.

It's a bit late, but the item name is [Seryuu Grill]. It needs a bit more ingenuity.

I add a new memo called Storage Verification. I write the date and the state on the memo.

For now, It can keep something warm, maybe it even has function to freeze state of things. I write such on the memo. I don't think that it could delay or stop time, that's way too improbable.

This time I take out the Seryuu Grill that I've put in Item Box. This one is already cold. The taste is like a cold grill. It's not rotten. Since it's only been half a day, it's natural.

Let's write that the item box doesn't retain warmth.

Next, I'm testing whether it's possible to move item between the storage and the item box.

I mark a copper coin with ink.

I try putting it inside the item box but it can't go in.
It seems that with skill level 1, it can't enter. I raise the skill level to 2 and inside it goes. I try putting various accessories, and it seems that it can only hold 4 pieces of 4 types of items. Is it the skill level squared? Let's write this on the memo.

When I open storage window in the menu, an item box tab has appeared.
I drag the item to the storage.

When I open the item box and look inside it, the transfer is successful.
I try doing the same thing in reverse, the item can be moved without problem.

Accessing the Item Box from the Storage consume no MP.

I put this information as a postscript on the storage verification memo.

Let's think how to use this next time.

Next, I'm trying if I can search the content of books inside the storage. It should be convenient to check it secretly in situation like the trouble with the dragon white stone today.
I was able to search in explanation in the game. Therefore I want to check if I could search for contents ...There were no books in the game though.

I tap the [Royal City Tour] book inside the storage and choose search on the popped-up menu.
I search for [Castle], then the explanations about castle are shown on the search hit. It seems that it can search with no problem.
The search results are displayed.
Ah, I've always wanted this function in real life~ I wouldn't have needed to scan books or OCR! Fantasy is awesome!

I suddenly come up with something and immediately try it.
If I could see the search result then couldn't I able to read the content of the book?
Since there is no browse option on the pop-up menu, I search for blank and it goes well.
I could read the entirety like it's on PC with scroll. It feels like a PDF file.
Since I could search for words with this, this is more convenient for reading books.

Next I try moving the book to the Item Box.

Unfortunately, this one can't do searching.
I wonder what's the difference?

◇

I take out the alchemy set and put it on top of the table on the corner o the room. The book remain in the storage. If it's like this, even in the dark, I

could read the book like the menu.

I'm reading [Introductory to Alchemy]. It's the book that the grandfather gnome firmly told me to read first. Rather than a book, shouldn't this be called a pamphlet? It's a think book with about 20 pages.

The book starts with explanations of the tools. Moreover, it features illustrations so beginners won't get the tools wrong. It's the book that the grandfather emphasized me to read first.

First, I take out the mortar and the pestle. The mortar is not the commonly known white porcelain but something pinkish in color. According to appraisal, it's made from agate. Isn't agate a jewel?

Following the book, I grind a reagent with 1 dried medicinal plant together, and then I put the crushed medicinal plant to a small bowl filled with water with a thin metal rod.
The compounding is complete 5 minutes from the start. Since it's the first thing to do for beginners, it's very easy.

>[Compounding Skill Acquired]

I immediately allocate skill point to the maximum and activate it.
The finished aqueous solution is [Antipyretic Medicine]. Judging from Appraisal, [Antipyretic Medicine -3] is under the name, while the detail says [Liquid medicine for lowering fever. The effect is extremely low, it's just a mere consolation]. This is my first time doing compounding, it can't be helped that it's low quality.

◇

"Those who have magic power go to chapter 2, those who don't go to chapter 4" is written in the next page of the introductory book.
It feels like a manual for business software, or rather, a game book from

years ago.

Chapter 2 is about basic refining. Seems that I have to make actual potions. According to the book, drugs made by compounding and potions made by refining have different effects even though they're similar. Production of potions need magic catalyst and MP, in exchange the effect will be displayed in real time.

I continue to practice the refining according to the book. I put the potion I made earlier inside a metal beaker. Then I mix it with two reagents there. Seems that I have to pour magic power before the reagents are dissolved. I tuck the beaker between my hands and imagine magic flowing from my right hand to the left.
It was like this with the spinning top, you pour magic by circulating from your right hand to left, I wonder if this is some kind of rule? Or is it just a simple custom?

The two reagents begin to shine faintly when I pour magic power. Since the room is dim, it glitters nicely. Seems that it's complete after it stops glittering.

>[Refining Skill Acquired]

It's not an alchemy skill huh. I also get refining skill to the max.
The completed Potion is an Antipyretic Potion -4. Since it's wasteful to discard it, I put it inside the bisque pot and put it inside the Storage.

◇

I open the menu to save the compounding recipes in the memo. The menu has a new tab, Production. I open the tab, and [Compound: Antipyretic Medicine], and [Refine: Antipyretic Potion] from the earlier are there. Not just them, there are also [Woodcraft: Club (Improvised)], [Composite: Insect Leg Spear (Improvised)], and [Composite: Insect Leg Spear (Improved)].

I'm sure that it wasn't there before, I wonder if I need to know 5 recipes as the prerequisite? Or maybe it need recipe beside improvised one. But since it's a unique skill, it's useless to try to verify it, so I stop.

I try tapping on the [Compound: Antipyretic Medicine]. There are 4 sub-menus, they're Compound, Inspect Recipe, Delete Recipe, and Detail. Compound seems to be disabled, it's grayed out. I though that maybe I could do compounding inside the Storage, but unfortunately it doesn't seem to be so. Even after I store the tools and reagents into the Storage, it's still disabled. There might be some conditions.

Then I continue the training to the end of the 6 chapters in the introductory book. Because there is one recipe in each chapter, I got to remember, [Compound: Painkiller], [Compound: Ointment], [Refine: Lower Recovery Medicine], and [Refine: Painkilling Magic Medicine (Potion)], those four.

Probably because I've maxed out the skills to maximum, all the medicines after chapter 3 are attached with [+5]. [The effect is extremely high, it's the highest quality] is written. I'm thinking of verifying the difference in effect next time.

◇

I'm about to start practicing the fifth chapter of the introductory book but...
<TLN: Yes, apparently this is happening before the last two paragraphs before the last ◇>

There are signs of someones' holding their breath on the other side of the door. The two luminous point shown on the radar haven't moved from awhile ago.
I stealthily approach the door, and open it at once.

Arisa and Martha-chan come rolling in as if being pulled by the door.

"What are you girls doing?"

I listen to the two while looking from above. My voice has become a bit flat.

"Na, nay.", Arisa is speaking in Kansai dialogue for some reason.
<TLN: Imagine "Ch, Chau nen." in Kana Ueda's (Rin Tohsaka) voice>
"I, I was just curious since I saw Arisa clinging to the door.", Martha-chan.
Yet you've also been clinging for more than 5 minutes, aren't you?

The two shaking girls are about to step away. They suddenly turn around and about to dash away to the corridor.
I quickly grab the nape of the two and restrict them.

"Wonder what were you really doing?", I cross-examine again.

"I'm sorry, I was tempted to see Satou-san embarrassing moment so I peeked."

Martha-chan gallantly apologizes.

"Uu~ because. A boy who's living together with girls! Went back to his room alone?! Don't you think that it's the job of the guardian to see what kind of foolery would unfold?"

Who's the guardian.
Furthermore, foolery... I don't have the mindset of a middle-schooler.

I release the gallant Martha-chan. Arisa isn't properly reflecting, or rather, her lust can plainly be seen so I punish her by poking her forhead 3 times in a row.
Seems that it still hurts even though I held back, she's holding on her forehead while rolling around on the floor. This might be a good medicine once in a while.

4-10. The Night Before Departure

Satou's here. I like both lawful shops and shops in gray-zone.
But I'll pass on compensated dating, Satou's.

◇

I take Arisa to the wagon. On the way there, I meet Martha-chan in the tavern, but she doesn't look particularly shy and offers me a meal.
Since I intend to eat outside with Liza and the girls, I decline.

When we got to courtyard where the wagon is, the 4 girls are waiting while looking bored.
When Liza notices me coming, she comes as the representative.

"Master, is it fine to put the luggage on board?"
"Let's see... Tomorrow, since we'll be picking more luggage from the merchant guild, let's do that tomorrow, but if we leave them here we'll be troubling the landlady huh."

Arisa whispers to me when I'm still thinking about it.

"Let's keep them in my Item Box? Don't you think that it's safer there?"
"There are only people we know now, so it's fine I guess."

I instruct the girls to pile the luggage inside the wagon for now.
The three small girls get up to the wagon to receive the luggage. Since Pochi and Tama have strength stat on par with two large adults, they handle the heavy preserved foods lightly. It looks as if this is some kind of magic show.

Arisa and Lulu are sorting the goods inside.
Needless to say, I and Liza are in charge of uploading the luggage. Since it's wasteful to wear expensive clothes for heavy duty job, I change into ordinary clothes. It's a simple linen tunic.

When we've finished loading the luggage, I made the girls beside Arisa to fetch water for 3 small barrels. One small barrel can hold 6 liter of water.

"You don't really need to exclude Lulu. I've talked about my Item Box with Lulu, you know?"

I'm afraid that someone would pick a fight with the beastkin girls if it's just them, so I ask Lulu to go with them.

"For now, let's split the preserved foods in half for each to keep, I'll carry the magic tools. Probably no one would steal the learning cards so put it on the wagon, and let's leave the foods that were entrusted to Liza and the girls alone."

"Kaay~", Arisa lightly said while storing the preserved foods into her Item Box. I also store the same amount.

The preserved foods are jerkies, baked black breads, fried beans and dried sweet potatoes.
Others that are in the bag are wheat flours, root crops, rock salts, and various other groceries. Since leaves vegetables are likely to give stomachache, it seems that they didn't buy it.

I've only noticed after doing this but...

"I'd love baskets or boxes to sort things out."
"Yeah true, I also want some cushioning materials. If we leave this alone, the cookwares will be noisy when the wagon shakes."
"I want thin ropes too."
"Ropes? Ah, for airing clothes huh."

"I think that having sturdy ropes is good."

Liza who just came back from getting water suggested.
I can't imagine what it would be used for.

"It's for draining blood from preys during the journey."

Right, we need ropes to tie thieves who may appear.

"You're such a philanthropist~ Thieves are thoroughly good-for-nothings and only bring harms, it's better to snatch away treasures from their hideout and annihilate them afterward. Even that famous thief-hunter girl said so you know~?"

What kind of acquaintance is she?
So there's a person who's famous for that, what a dangerous world.

"Are we not short on anything else?"

Pochi raises her hand while standing on her tiptoes. Did Arisa taught her that?

"Yes, Pochi-kun. Say it."
"A stool! I want one no desu~"

When I ask in detail, she seems to have used a stool when she helped taking care of the horse. She's brimming with enthusiasm to take care of the horses during the journey too. She's really reliable.

Tama also raises her hand in the same manner and says, "Brush~?". She tilts her body in troubling manner while raising her hand, cute. It seems that she wants a tool to brush the horse and clean their hoofs.
Tools for taking care of the horses, I completely forget about them.

Lulu also timidly raises her hand.

"....U, umm.", Her face turn bright red just by saying that.
I wonder if it's something that embarrassing? I glance at Arisa... She winks back. Are you from Showa era!

"I, I want a washboard and a bucket."

Is that really embarrassing? I have them in the storage so I've forgotten about it, but it's certainly necessary.

"If it's really possible, I want a mirror! I'm fine with hand-mirror size."
"Arisa, you're too extravagant."

Liza firmly gives a warning to Arisa. It's unusual for Liza to give an opinion before I decide.
I wonder if it's expensive in this world? That reminds me, I don't think I've seen any glassware. But, I'm sure there were mirrors from polished metals.

"I'd like to use one too, let's buy it if it's not too expensive."
"Yay."

Arisa looks unusually happy without acting. Lulu is also smiling. Liza doesn't have any objection since it's my decision. Pochi and Tama... don't seem like they understand.

It's decided that, tomorrow when I'm going to take the commodities from the guild, the five will buy the things we've just discussed.

After changing clothes, we go out to eat together.
That day, we eat dinner at stalls not far away from the gate inn. Since we've been eating meats everyday, I order light soups, and soy bean breads.
Since Pochi and Tama look so sad while we're eating, I order meat skewers for four portions. It's Liza who looks the happiest somehow... but it's okay as long as they're happy.

◇

Since I meet Yosagu-san who just come back from work on the way to the inn, we decide to advance the plan to go out during the night a day forward.
Arisa is saying, "Even though you have me, you adulterer~", but I make Liza

to carry her like a luggage back to the inn.

"Is that okay?"
"It's fine, she's just something like a little sister. The person herself thinks that she's a guardian though."

The east district is crowded just like yesterday.
Yosagu-san, who's chewing a bought skewer from stalls, is greeting girls who are gathering under the outside light, while we press forward to the crowds.

When I ask if they're his acquaintances, he says, "They're courtesans." They usually work as waitress and courtesan in the inn at the same time, but during the slave auction they seem to look for customers outside.

Confirming from AR, a lot of them have [Sex Technique] skills. ...However, I'm anxious to see that a lot of them have various venereal diseases on the abnormal condition tab. Mostly are in [Incubation], but nearly 60% of them are suffering from it.
I wonder if it can't be healed with magic?

We enter red light district and walk for a while. Metal plates of magical light are hung on the shops, illuminating them with cheap-looking light.
Most brothels are two story buildings with verandas on the second floor. Courtesans who wear expensive clothes with high exposures are lining up on the verandas trying to lure guests.

When I look, they raise their skirts and show their bare legs then throw kisses. It's a feature every shop has, interesting.
The people who have [Sex Technique] increase, and proportionally the people who have Venereal Disease[Incubation] decrease for about 30%. As expected there is no one who has Venereal Disease [Diseased].

"Young master, here's the shop. Let's enter quickly."

Yosagu-san pulls me to the shop. This shop seems to be refined, there is no girls attracting guests on the veranda.

When I enter, verandas are installed on the second floor high along the corridor. I lightly wave at the girl who I saw from outside there.

The floor is made from bare wood, but it's well polished. Is it about 30 tatami wide? There are a stove, doors and a stair to the second floor inside. There are 4 rooms shielded with cloths on the left and right.

"Welcome to the Seryuu Branch of Captivating Mansion."

A woman in later half of her 40 come out from the back door while greeting us with penetrating voice. The woman is wearing a pink dress with excessive frills, but her fat is too self-asserting, her clothes looks like it'll burst apart at the seams.

Guided by the woman, we go to one of the partitioned room.
It seems that this is a room for guests to wait for the girls, since it'd be awkward to meet acquaintances in a brothel. The obese shopkeeper sure knows her stuff.

There are a sofa and three low quality marble tables inside the room. A girl of around 10 years old is standing by as a parlor maid.

"Excuse me.", the girl puts small green sake cup in front of me and Yosagu-san. Transparent liquids are inside of them. It's a distilled liquor from the smell.

According to the AR, the cups are made from jade. The liquor inside the cup is Shiga sake. It's a strong liquor with 50% alcohol content made from wheat.

"Ku~ delicious!", Yosagu-san gulp the liquor in high spirit.
It seems that he forgot to drink this sake when he went to this shop before.

The girl, is pouring the sake huh?
I sip it once as a social act. It certainly tastes good. It's like whiskey but transparent instead of amber-colored, I wonder if the processing is different?

Before Yosagu-san had his third cup, the shopkeeper comes back with 5 girls.

The first is the most beautiful girl with blond hair and blue eyes. With a small face, thin eyebrows, and strong-willed looking big pupils. Sticky-looking lips. Two large breasts that look like they would spill from the open chest clothes. Most likely, she's the most popular girl in this shop. She's 18 years old.

The second and the third are twins. They're beautiful girls with black hairs and black eyes. Their most notable looks are their western, or rather, French style. One of them has smaller breast than the other, but it's still around C cup. It seems that there a lot of people who spend the night with the two of them together. Of course, the fee will be for two people. They're 16 years old.

The fourth is a woman with droopy eyes. With dull blond hair and reddish brown pupils. Her eyebrows are thick, she's a gentle healing woman. Her breast is the biggest. It seems that there are a lot of repeaters for her. Her voice sounds mellow, it's comforting to hear. She's 21 years old, the oldest in this shop.

The fifth is a girl with red hair and reddish brown pupils. She's pales in comparison with the other girls but she has the nicest expression. She feels lively or rather, fascinatingly wholesomely erotic. Her breast size is average, but still around D cup. For me it's quite enough to be categorized as big breasts. 20 years old. She's the only person in this shop who doesn't has sex techniqu skill.

Every girls are wearing thin one-piece sticking to their skins looking erotic. The chest and abdomen area are transparent, I cannot help but utter GJ.

"Which girl will you choose?", the shopkeeper asked. Yosagu-san asked with his eyes, "Please don't hesitate to choose your favorite girl.", I said and he really did choose the most beautiful girl without hesitation.
I also aim her, but I'll yield here.
Yosagu-san drinks down the liquor left in the cup in one gulp, and leave the

room with that girl. It seems that the second floor is for the guests to enjoy themselves.

I was at loss for a bit, but I chose the fifth girl in the end.
The guest room only has a simple bed, but it's clean and smells good so I have no complaint.

When we entered the room, the girl hurriedly took off her clothes and flaunted her body. I enjoy the feel of OPPAI liberated from the clothes, enjoying scooping them with my hands.
It's exactly the festival of OPPAI. Who was it who says that OPPAI contains man's dream?

I hug her waist and we fall down to the bed. It's a mature woman's body after a long time, so I'm taking my time to carefully enjoy it ...in various ways.

Though since the girl's reaction was good, I unintentionally gave too much service. Like this, I'm not sure who desire whom.
We enjoy ourselves until midnight. She faints from too much pleasure in the middle, so I stop.

>[Sex Technique Skill Acquired]
>[Lover's Talk Skill Acquired]
>[Seduction Skill Acquired]

Apparently this body has too much stamina, the partner couldn't catch up. I use her breasts that I've enjoyed plentifully as pillows and depart to the world of dream.

4-11. Departure (1)

Satou's here. I love to make programs without being limited. The last time I did that was when I made a legged robot for my graduate research during college. When I became a working adult, I haven't done it.
This time, it seems that I'll make magic tools.

◇

Yep, it's a good morning.
I walk the town while enjoying the morning sunlight, feeling refreshed.

Yosagu-san was unlike me, yawned constantly looking sleepy. I invited him for breakfast but since he didn't come home his family was probably mad so we decided to part ways outside the shop.
"If I made it big in the labyrinth city, let's come again.", I shouted him that.

Even though it's early in the morning, the people who are having meals on the stalls, and the people who are selling fresh groceries are lively.
The vulgar atmosphere that usually permeates in the east district was probably the fault of the visitors.

I'm smelling something good from the stalls.
Although I'm not particularly hungry, let's buy some souvenirs for the girls.
Though I can't buy sushi in wooden box pack like those fathers from Showa era.

I buy a big handbasket made from thin wood from a street stall. It's about as big as two rice bowl. I also bought two lidded containers for soup and put it inside the basket.

I buy warm meals and put it into the Storage through the basket. I keep buying various things to the extent that it doesn't look unnatural.

Soup made from meatless animal bone and vegetables. Thick stew with vegetables and dried meat. Various grilled meats starting from grilled goat meats. Seryu grills. Freshly baked flat breads. Steamed potatoes. There are some scratched fruits from many fruits I've bought.

I've bought for about 30 servings. It's too much for souvenirs but I'll keep some for emergency. With these much, even if we are in an environment impossible to light fire, I could still provide warm meals. In the first place, I plan to use the Storage so that we don't end up in desperate situation.

I wanted to buy alchemy materials, but it was closed at the time.

◇

When I get back to the gate inn, Arisa who saw me from the window comes running down.
After she looked at my face, she begins to stomp the ground with her foot.

"Uuu~~~~. Mou! That glossy face~~."

She bites the edge of a handkerchief, taking a pose. Every single one of her gestures are old... let's not ask her age before she was reincarnated.

"I was the one who was supposed to take your first time~~"

I don't remember making such promise.
I keep silent about it since it'd be bad if I don't.

"You're fussy, and this isn't my first time anyway."
"Nooo, even though it was one in a millennium chance to snatch away the DT of a boy...."
<TLNote: DT, Doutei, Virgin. :p >

My condolences.

I call for Lulu, and we gather in front of the wagon. The breakfast are potatoes and meat skewers that I've just bought.

I talk to Arisa in whisper to check on Lulu's condition. If she still hasn't recovered, I'll postpone our departure for two days.
According to Arisa, it was only serious in the first day, it's fine now.
Since it looks painful, let's give her the painkiller I made from practices.
There are five of it, those should be enough.

After we finished our simple meal, I advance as planned yesterday.

◇

I ride the wagon until the parking space of the Commercial Guild. Horses were easier to fine-drive unlike cars so it was easy.
It's lively here too in the morning. Every carriages which occupy half of the parking lot are unloading their cargo. Every carriages look well seasoned.
The ratio for luggage carriages and covered wagon is fifty-fifty. The carts are loaded with a lot of 10 kilogram bags. The people who are moving the bags look like ruffians who wear villager-like simple long-sleeved shirt and trousers. I can see patchworks on its knee and elbow.
While I look at other carriages out of curiosity, Sunifun-san who has finished confirming the load and assessing the prices comes here.

"Good morning, Satou-sama. You came really early."
"I'm sorry. Am I troubling you by coming too early?"

I don't think that what I'm doing is that bad, but let's apologize for now.

"Not at all. The god of business surely like people who are quick."

Even though Sunifun-san said that, if I look at the surrounding, it's probably customary to bring in the goods in the morning and bring it out in the afternoon.

I am guided to the warehouse. The goods that I've ordered yesterday are put on one of the section. I confirm the products and their number with the help of an employee. I check the contents of every barrel of the Dragon White Stone and close the lid.
Sunifun-san watches over me doing that like a grandfather watching over his grandson. Hey, you're not that old right.
I ask the employee to carry the goods to my wagon, while I complete the payment for the transaction at the office.

When I get back to the wagon, the loading is complete so I visually check on the goods. Since I've put tags on the Dragon White Stones, it doesn't seem like it has been swapped. It can't see through if the inside of the barrels are swapped, but they probably wouldn't have enough time to go that far.
I thank the employee and give him one big copper coin.

"May you have good businesses!", Sunifun-san left the words as farewell as I left the guild.

◇

"Welcome nano desu~."

I'm greeted by Pochi when I return to the gate inn. She hugs me as I go down the coach seat, so I rub her head. I separate from her as I pat her head, and I work to unfasten the horses from the wagon.

"I'll help no desu.", she immediately stands on the stoll that we've just bought and begins to help. Might as well teach her the way to unfasten the belt, manage the yoke, etc. It's also good to review myself as I teach others.

"What's everyone else are doing?"
"Lulu is washing over there. Others are shopping no desu~."
"So Pochi and Lulu are house sitting huh?"

"I'm watching the luggages no desu~"

Pochi said it pridefully. She's certainly qualified for it. I can somehow imagine Tama sleeping on top of the luggages.

I ask Pochi to take care of the horses in the stables. Meanwhile, I put the goods I brought from the commercial guild into the Storage.
I thought of leaving the goat leathers and wools outside, but the smell was severe so I stow it away. Let's practice to make deodorant next time.

Pochi carried the luggage until it loaded. Pochi says, "Watching the luggage no desu." from the wagon. Since she's doing her best, I'll go to see Lulu's condition. Since the laundries that Lulu is doing are underwear, I go back without calling her.

◇

After that, I ask Pochi for house sitting, and take a cab to the plaza before the castle. The flower bed on the center are still being worked on but the pavements are already beautifully set with the paving stones. They sure work fast. They might have used magic since this is fantasy.

The wall on the magic shop are still being repaired, but it seems that it's open for business for once.

"...then... catalyst... scales. If you get your hand on these, I'd like you to deliver it to the magic corps station."
"I'll see to ask my magicians and alchemist friends. At most, I could get my hands on 1-2 pieces of scales."

As I enter the store, a magician-looking old woman and old man come out while having those conversations.
The old man take a glance at me but leave without saying anything.

"Oh, a visitor eh? I'm sorry but I don't deal on love potion or energy drink. Go to the alchemy store in the east district."

It's a thin and dried up old woman. Wearing clothes appropriate for a magician. Deep blue robes with long sleeves, wide-opening tall hat unwieldy for indoor, wearing numerous ring with suspicious design on her fingers, and with about a 5 cm big emerald pendant designed after skull on her neck.

"No, I want to buy magic books."

She raised just an eyebrow in surprise after hearing my words. She put lean the cane which was on her hand to the wall and take out a litograph from under the counter.
Yamato stone again?

"We don't sell magic books to a man without talent okay? Recently there are a lot of scoundrels of nobles who buy magic books just for prestiges, soiling them. I'll sell the books only to people having certain amount of magic measured from this instrument."

...Dang, I should've brought Arisa along.
I don't know how far this stone can measures, but it'd be bad if my enormous magic power is known.

"I'm sorry, I'm afraid that it'll break if I carelessly touch it."
"Fuhn, excuse huh? If you put magic power on this, it will emit blue light. It's cheap compared to the instrument in royal capital, but that's exactly why it's robust. So that it won't break if a veteran do his best, magic power stops flowing after it feed on the required amount. If one has a capability of a full-fledged magician then it will shine blue. Other than that it'll stay red as it is."

Is it safe? If it's as the old woman said that there's no problem but if the punchline is, "Actually it can read the exact value.", that's scary.

"If you don't want to try then go home. I have a business to get Dragon Powder from my alchemist friend after this."

The powder that the old man mentioned earlier is Dragon Powder huh. When I thought that it's a familiar name, I remember that I obtained some in the labyrinth.
Would she be willing to trade magic books for this?

"Shopkeeper-san, If it's dragon powder then I have it, if you're fine with I can give it to you?"

I take out 5 vial of Dragon Powder from the bag. I got 6 from the labyrinth, but I decide to keep one in hand.
When I take it out I estimate the market price... 20 gold coins huh?

"Are those real?"

The old woman picks one vial and takes out one earpick worth of powder, then she tests it with some reagents and apparatuses.

"I'll buy it for 10 gold coins a vial."

What a greedy old woman.
When I say that the market price is 20 gold coins, she says, "That's the price on a shop", rejecting it.
Since I don't intend to force the sales and the aggrement doesn't seem to be achievable, I'm about to leave the shop, but her hands hold out at the speed that doesn't match her age. Her eyes are fiery and glittering, she's a bit scary.

"W, wait! That thunder old man is probably going to buy them at that price, I'll buy it at 20 gold coins a piece. But I'll pay at the end of the month as the condition. Since the payment from officials is slow."
"I'm sorry but I intend to leave the city tomorrow, so I can't accept that condition."

The negotiation continue until lunch time, and in the end, it's decided that the payment is in the form of magic books. Because magic books higher than intermediate level aren't allowed to be sold to people who aren't a citizens of

Seryuu city, I'm having a hard time choosing books that worth 100 gold coins.

First, I'll collect lower-class magic books from every elements. Still it's only 40 gold coins, so I buy thesis and investigation, and various miscellaneous notes for reading materials. It's 60 gold coins up to this.
Then I buy canes and amulets. It seems that only those who have permit from the city are allowed to sell magic scroll, so I can't buy it here.

Furthermore, I buy cheap catalysts for making potion. It seems that they're made from magic cores from lower class monsters.

"Oh, your main job is an alchemist eh. Then, how about these books?"

The old woman takes out two magic books from the back of the store written with, "Magic Catalyst and the Material", "Seeds and Catalysts". I'm a bit worried with those titles, but since the author is named Jahad, I buy it. It's the maker of the spinning disk magic tool if I'm not mistaken.
I buy 5 other books written by this guy.

"15 gold coins remaining is it. What else do you wish? I don't have good magic tools left. At best, I have a tool that emit light, or a tool that heat up if you put it above."

Oioi, you're putting out good things in the end.
When I receive them, the first is a crystal ball about as big as a candy ball and the other is something black that looks like a pot stand with 20cm diameter. It's about 3 cm thick and feel like it's made from porcelain. On one side, a copper line is drawn on top of a concentric circle.s

The crystal ball-- Light Drop begin emitting light after I pour it magic power. Seems that it shines for 30 minutes every time it's poured with magic power.
The pot stand-- Light Hot Plate is also the same, by putting magic power on the copper line, it gives warmth for 10 minutes. However, since it only emit heat enough to scald a person yet not enough to boil water, it's not suitable for cooking. That should be usable to warm tea or stew though.

The Light Drop is one gold coin each, while the Light Hot Plate is 3 gold coin. Since the Light Drop is in stock of two, I buy both.

In the end, since I couldn't find good stuffs for the remaining 10 gold coins, it's exchanged in cash. I thought that I have to use it all up but that's not good. Dangerous, dangerous.

"Fuhn, putting money aside, it's been a long time since someone bought this much."
"Thank you very much, I was able to buy many nice things."

Thanking the old woman, I ask to deposit the stuffs I've bought in the store for a while. After this, I've completely forgotten to buy map from the bookstore next door.
The old woman kindly agree to keep the stuffs, then I go toward the bookstore.

4-12. Departure (2)

Satou's here. I'm not a person who often take trips, but I've strangely grown attached to a city I've only been to for a few days.
I'm want to come again for notable tourist attractions.

◇

The bookstore is kept by the already recovered gray haired old man, Semone-san isn't in the shop. I'm not able to worship that glorious proportion... regrettable.

The shopkeeper give me the map to labyrinth city.
How do I say this, it's a map that screams, "Measurement? What's that is it tasty?". Although I didn't expect it to have map symbols or contours, but it's questionable if this thing has concept of cardinal directions.
Probably it's shown on my face, the old man explains. Accurate maps are classified informations so only people from the kingdom's side could get a hold on it. I miss Google Map.

Since it's better than nothing, I buy 5 maps until it reach the Labyrinth city. Later on, I learn that merchant guild sells better maps.

My business is over with this, but the shopkeeper, demonstrating his commercial spirit and kindness, recommends me various books.
Books that looks like it'll be useful for journeys like, "Journey to Royal Capital", "Dictionary of Herbs", "Carriage Repair Reverse Dictionary", etc, I'm charmed by their titles so I buy all the recommended ones.

There are introductory books for woodworking, smithing, engraving and various manufacture-related books, but since there's no demand and coupled that they're old books, they don't sell well at all.
When I show an interest to it, the shopkeeper begin to pile one book after another. Since they could be bought for 2 gold coins for everything, I decide

to buy them all.

Furthermore, he also recommends good reading books for breaks during a journey. Although most of them are about love or heroes, but I find exceptions like, "Ancient Battlefield and Withered Labyrinth", "Mad Magician and Death Army", "Man who Created Labyrinths". I buy the three of them and 5 popular picture books.
Picture books are good for learning letters.

It was a bit over the budget, so I drive it down to 10 gold coins.

◇

I bought too much indeed. The bag with almost 30 books inside is quite heavy. If I didn't have the status compensation, my waist would have gone bad.
It becomes quite the amount after I receive the stuffs I've bought from the magic shop. Though it's not like I could not walk back carrying them, I'll look way to conspicious so I wait for a cab carriage.

"Hello, nimble Onii-san."

I turn toward the voice behind.
With a face as if saying that the prank is successful, it's Zena-san's coworker girl friend (Lilio).

"Hello, Lilio-san. Did you imitate Zena-san?"
"Ehehe~ Did I pass? Hey hey, did you skip a beat?"

I somehow understand that I mustn't let Lilio meet Arisa.

"I noticed immediately because your voice is different."
"Eh~ Too bad~ but, but, isn't that love? The power of love?"

Girls really do like love talks huh.
Lilio is coming closer to impose her small body. I have enough loli girls, so push her shoulder back so our body doesn't stick together.

"Are you alone today?"
"Yep, the other soldiers are sleeping~ But Zena, from yesterday noon until midnight today, is keeping on guard the who~le time. Magic troops are lacking in number isn't it."

I wanted to say some parting words to Zena-san before I leave for the journey but...

Alright, let's change the departure to tomorrow morning.

"Lilio-san, could you deliver a message for Zena-san?"
"Okay~ But no passionate lines that would make chest hot okay? If it's too intense, it might be interpreted wrong you know~."

While crossing her arms, Lilio talks with a bad face.
I ask her to tell Zena that I'll be leaving early tomorrow morning. Lilio willingly agree to deliver the message.

"Acha~ Zena's first love end up unrequited huh~." , It seems that she intended it to be a monologues, but I heard it loud and clear.

I don't reply to that and go back to the gate inn wth a cab carriage.

◇

On the carriage, I store the books inside the Item Box. When Arisa knew about me going to the bookstore, "Didn't I say to take me along~", she's angry, but after I tell her that I bought every elemental beginner magic books, her smile returns.
Besides, you probably haven't learned how to learn Shiga kingdom letters

right?

"Then, are we going to depart?"

Since Arisa asked, I tell everyone that we'll depart tomorrow morning.

"I'm going to the alchemist shop on the east district and the general guild to finish some business, so check if there's anything that we forgot to buy. It's fine to play learning card when it's over."

"Card!", "Nano desu!", Pochi, Tama and Lulu rejoice. It's rare to see the figure of Lulu who looks happy like a normal girl, I click on REC button in my heart.

"Empty dummy barrels are too light it'll seem unnatural, so I think it's good to store long-lasting potatoes in them."
"It's going to be winter soon, it might be too cold to sleep with just the mantle. I think it's good to purchase a blanket for master at least."

I agree with Arisa and Liza's opinions and allow them to buy those. Of course the blankets are for four people. Since Arisa saw some made from cottons in the marketplace, I permitted her to buy after hearing the price.

◇

I go to the alchemy shop alone, and buy a lot of painkiller and deodorant materials and recipe compilations. It's an extravagance worry, but when you're shopping without caring for the remaining money, maybe because there's no fun of hesitating, it's a bit lonely.

On the general guild, I listen for the progress of the request I asked from Nadi-san. Even though it has only been a day, it's already mostly complete. The rest weren't in home so she's going to go back tomorrow.
Nadi-san passes me something as I give her the reward. What she gave is a

big basket filled with things like small bag with money, vegetables, sandals and various other.
Poor home gives vegetables or home industry product like sandals instead of money, even things like wood spoons and others. It seems that Nadi-san did say that rewards are unnecessary but she was given them before she could decline.
I tell her that I'm leaving Seryuu city tomorrow and I present her the rewards as a bonus.

"Satou-san, your next destination must be either royal capital or duke-sama capital right?"
"No, I intend to go to the labyrinth city."
"There are a lot of demi-human in labyrinth city, life will be easy there."

Come to think of it, I haven't meet the most famous demi-human, the elves. I thought that Seryuu city should have them.

"That's right, I'd like to see the elves the most."

Nadi-san is showing a subtle expression hearing my reply.
She looks at the back and calls the manager. It's the old man who were always sleeping.

"Manager~ please come here for a bit."

The manager comes here while stroking his beard. He's much younger than I thought. He's a bit small and skinny, but he's a handsome man with a matching greenish black long hair.
The manager who got here doesn't say anyhing, Nadi-san lifts one side of his hair up. They're quite familiar.

Lookie lookie, she points her finger.
The manager's ear, the tip is a bit sharp. Is he demi-human too?

"Satou-san's reaction is too light."
"I'm sorry, what's wrong with manager-san's ear?"」

Nadi-san is mad after hearing my answer.

"Mou~ What are you saying, I'm showing you the proof since you said that you want to see an elf."
"Eh? He's an elf?　I thought that elves' ears are longer though?"

Is he a half-elf?
The manager-san looks grumpy from my reply. He goes back to his position and resumes his nap.
Looks like I've offended him with my answer somehow.

"Mou~ manager! Just because you were mistaken with long-ears tribe (Booch), please don't immediately sulk!"
"What kind of tribe are long-ears tribe?　It's said that elves has ears this long from my hometown?"

I make a motion to express long ears with my finger.

"What Satou-san said is a tribe among ears tribe called long ears tribe (Booch). They're taller than normal people in average, and their hair is blond instead of green. They have talent in magic and live as long as the elves. The saga empire first emperor was an ears tribe and was a king of the hero, so the tribe is considered to be sacred. They seldom ever goes out of Saga's empire, since they even have a sanctuary there, so they're rarely seen. However, they're hated by the elves and is called 『False Elf』."

I see, let's not get it wrong next time.
I apologize to the manager for the rudeness. Since the manager answers by fluttering his hand while napping, I take that I'm forgiven.

◇

The next morning, we've finished having breakfast in the stalls. I have paid

for the inn too.
Martha-chan said, "Stay here next time too~" as a carefree farewell, I leave the inn by driving the wagon.
<TLN: Operating? Or driving? Are you driving horses? or riding but he's not exactly riding on the horse.>

I thought that Zena-san will come to see me off, but she had an all nighter, she's probably still asleep. Let's send her a letter next time.

When we're departing I inadvertently see a white dot moving along the inner wall.
I greet the knight Soun at the gate entrance and leave the city. I'm troubling people if I wait here.

When I got a bit away from the gate, I hear, "Wait~", from behind.
Since I'd be a hindrance for the traffic here I go to an open space outside the gate and stop the wagon.

The traffice at the gate looks to be in disorder when I look at it. One horse is slipping out from there. I wave my hands from the top of the wagon.

"Satou-san!"

Zena-san is coming here on a horse while smoothing her hair which got disheveled by the wind. She's wearing a dress unsuitable for riding a horse. She wears different cosmetic than the usual.

"I'm glad that I made it!"
"Zena-san, I'm also glad that I got to meet you before I leave."

It's good that I don't end up being ungrateful.

"You're going to the labyrinth city right? Please send me a letter when you've settled down. I will absolutely reply back!"
"Yes, I will wihout fail."

I thought that she'd say that she wants to go together, but I'm glad that it's about letters.
"Pinky swear~", Arisa shows her smirking face from the wagon while saying unnecessary words.

Zena-san bites it and vigorously asks for "I want to pinky swear!", I couldn't refuse and we pinky swear.
Doing it at this age, I'm a bit embarrassed.

I'll properly say farewell to Zena-san who stares at her bend little finger ecstatically.

"Then, let's meet again some other time! I will send you a letter for certain after I arrive at the labyrinth city."
"Yes! I'm looking forward to the day I'm be able to see you again."

It's good that it didn't become a sad farewell.
My reunion with her will happen faster than I thought, but I still don't know at this time.

Zena-san earnestly waves her hand until the knight Soun grabs her by the nape to the station.

Intermission: A Certain Master and His Vassal's Conversation

"--As has been said, with the cooperation of all temples and magicians, the labyrinth won't expand toward the city, and as long as the ceremony is maintained, the barrier will last. In the future, for the sake of reinforce the barrier, we'll build several holy monuments in the eastern district. Please sign these documents for securing those sites."

The white-haired official-- consul of the earl, Ortes, read the report while adjusting his monocle.

"Then, is it usable? That labyrinth?!"

A man bend his body forward on the desk while having a joyful look-- the earl of Seryuu.
Can the labyrinth be commercialized? He asked.

"The three great temple, Parion, Garleon and Tenion have conducted ceremonies to determine it and the result are 『ġēse』, 『ġīse』, and 『ġēse』. They're relatively favorable."

The consul stop there, and add, "However."

"Our experts have pointed out several problems."

"The first one must be about the entrance which is inside the city."
"That's exactly right. Other labyrinths have shown that monsters could overflow from it after some years. Therefore, it is necessary to have something to have blockades in case it happens."

"Additional walls outside the barrier huh... quite a lot of expense. Since we already have the quarry from 3 years ago, we only need the workers huh."
"Yes, and we have just secured women and men slaves who looks able from slave dealers."

The earl becomes dubious after hearing the consul.

"Do we need to buy slaves for this? Don't we have enough labor already?"
"The people have become agitated, we'll use the slaves until temporary walls are complete. After we have finished using them we could just put them in the mine. Or we could make the obedient ones to be soldiers."

The earl considers the prior investment before deciding. When the labyrinth is able to steadily supply magic cores, the economy of earldom will most likely quickly grow.

"Have you blocked the entrance for the time being?"
"Our experts said that it's dangerous to completely block it."
"The reason?"
"It could ruin a country they said."
"You mean 『The Nightmare of Ishtan』? I thought it was just a myth, did it actually happen?"

There was a country called Ishtan 200 years ago. The country suffered significant damage from monsters that emerged from a labyrinth. The king who was worried with that invited a famous magician to seal off the entrance of the labyrinth. For safely closing the labyrinth and made the monsters threat disappear, the king was hailed as the wise king. However, 10 years later, the seal was broken by tsunami of monsters which overflowed from it and destroyed the entire country in a day.

"Wasn't Ishtan safe for 10 years? Then it should be alright to close it off for a bit while right?"
"Yes, we can't guarantee it but it's most likely fine."
"Alright, then close the labyrinth's entrance after the inner walls' construction is finished."
"I will arrange it at once. Please sign this document."

The consul presents the document which he has prepared it beforehand.
The earl signs while reading it and continues to talk with the consul.

"There's another problem in regard with the labyrinth."
"What is it?"
"The Dungeon Master was the senior demon who had attacked this castle some times ago."

The earl breaks his intense expression, and ask the consul expressionless.

"Is that definitive?"
"Yes, a magic soldier who participated with the castle's defense was on the spot. Furthermore, the assistant priest of Garleon, Nebinen, testified for the power of the demon."
"Fumu, we don't know the demon's goal but we've obtained the answers from the oracle. It can't be helped if we're anxious."

The consul furrows his brow a bit, but regains his composure.

"We're obliged to tell the king about the labyrinth, how will you choose the representatives?"
"Yeah, if I'm not mistaken one of the survivor of the labyrinth is a noble."
"It's viscount Belton."
"Then let's make Belton with several officials to be ones."
"I understand. I'll send a messenger to inform Viscount Belton."

The consul summons his subordinate and tell him to prepare the letter for the Viscount while adjusting his monocle.
The report itself has actually been sent to the kingdom with the magic mirror. But it's considered proper for a noble to be the messenger for reporting directly to the king.

"Were those all the things about the labyrinth?"

The earl is confirming while stroking his goatee which doesn't really suit him.

"No, I was wondering if we could send inspection teams to the labyrinth city, Selbira."

"Learning from the pioneer huh. How many do you suppose we should send?"
"Four groups consisting of two military units groups, a merchants group and a general citizens group would be good. Let's make them bring back the know-how about the public order problem, tax, and structure of explorer guild. If possible, I'd like them to invite some high ranking explorers to investigate our labyrinth's rank."
"General citizen? Is there any meaning in sending commoners?"

The earl asks dubiously.

"It's my bad for calling them general citizens. I mean to say 'people who are knowledgeable about the streets.'"

The earl who seemingly agree with the consul's answer exaggeratedly gives permission.

"Excellent, I'll leave personnels' selection to you. Tell me when you have your candidates."
"I respectfully accept it."

◇

"Were you able to grasp the identity of the silver masked hero?"

The public call him hero, but no one know his identity. Since the earl cannot overlook an existence that could equal senior demon hiding in this city, he did not only make his formal investigators but also the consul's spy to investigate.

"We have succeeded in narrowing down the candidates, but we're lacking conclusive evidence."
"Who and who?"

"The first candidate is Sir Kigori from the knight. He has body reinforcement magic and herculean-strength skill. He was off duty so he stayed at home during that day. There are many other things that match like his long blond hair, but he should has been boasting more if he was really the silver mask."
"Right, he's a narcissistic man isn't he?"

"The second candidate is Yasaku-shi the explorer. He's a level 45 warrior. He's not only high-leveled but also equipped with various strong magic tools, so he could possibly endure the demon's attacks. He's accustomed with fighting monsters and demons. However, his hair is black."
"What is such man doing in this kind of frontier place?"
"Your excellency, please stop belittling your own territory."

The earl is laughing while expressing his gratitude.

"His aim is probably dragon scales from the Dragon's Valley."
"Is he suicidal?"
"No, what I said isn"t exactly right, he's probably aiming for dragons which are nesting away from the dragon's valley. As one would expect, he couldn't possibly come back alive if he goes to the Dragon's Valley."
"Yeah, it'd be over just by the scales tribe before he could even meet the dragon."

The consul clears his throat and goes back to the discussion.

"The conversation had wandered off. The third candidate is Yasaku-shi's companion, the magic swordsman, Tan-shi. His level is high at 42, and he's probably used with dealing with demon like Yasaku-shi. He's a blond, but he can't possibly fought the senior demon while being only able to use body reinforcing magic."
"Right, it's not like the opponent is unaffected by magic."
"Moreover, explorers usually fight in party."

After being lost in thought for a while,

"I see, certainly we're lacking the decisive evidence to ascertain who the

silver mask is."
"Yes."

"Is there no other candidate?"
"It's not like there isn't, but beside the three above, it's impossible judging by their ability..."
"They might be hiding their true ability you know?"

The earl is grinning.

"There are four people who were omitted from candidacy. The first one is the Earl predecessor's bastard child, Ratts-dono. He was present in both uproars. His hair and height match the condition. He also has the need to hide his true ability and identity. That said, someone like him probably remained as a spectator until the end."
"That's right, brother-in-law is that kind of guy."

The villainous face of his brother-in-law floats in the earl's mind. It looks like a villain compared to the real person, probably because of the long discord between them.
He's not related with the silver mask, but since he was present during both the incident with the demon, the earl orders the consul to keep an eye on him.

"The second one is the alchemist, Akabana-dono. He wore the same robe as the silver mask, he even had the silver mask in his house. He was present at the day of the uproar, showing his face on the relief station."
"Hou? That's suspicious."

The consul shakes his head at the earl's words.

"However, silver mask isn't an uncommon thing. Because it's used during harvest festival to ward off demon, there are probably more than 10 shops which sell it."
"Fumu, was it a man who was fighting?"
"No, the figure was slim and the skin was abnormally pale that it didn't match the strength the silver mask was showing. A friend of mine testified that."

"Maybe he drank medicine that could change his body?"
"The elder confirm the existence of such medicine but the feedback reaction is too strong that it's suicidal for healthy person to drink it."
"Is that so."

Even if it's possible, if the medicine makes your body handicapped then there would be no meaning in fighting. The earl thinks so and moves his interest to the next candidate.

"The third one is a man called Usu who's affiliated with a criminal guild called Brown Rat."
"It's a guy who's a polar opposite of a hero."
"This man had similar physique and hair and he was confirmed to be present during both uproars. Moreover, the one who was carrying the demon's arm during the rebellion uproar was this guy."
"Hou? Did he cut the demon's arm and got possessed by it?"
"The possibility exists."

The consul picks on thin document from the stack he's holding and gives it to the earl.

"A hypothesis has arrived from the elder. 'Wasn't the demon who possessed the man called Uusu different from the demon who attacked the castle?' He said."
"For two senior demons appeared at the same time, isn't that impossible?"
"Maybe they were demons who were in hiding in hope of creating a labyrinth, he said."

"And then they fought each other because one intruded another's territory is it?"
"It's written as such in the hypothesis."

"How much is the truth from what old man thunder said?"

The earl puts one hand on his chin while thinking.
If it was said by someone else then we would laugh at it together, but the

elder that the consul refer-- the earl call him the old man thunder, is the leading magician in this territory and even in the kingdom he's among the five most powerful one. Even if what he said seemed absurd, it couldn't be ignored.

"Right then, since there's no evidence I can't say for sure, but if it's the truth then a lot of things would start to make sense."
"Like the abnormal endurance?"
"Yes. While fist fighting the demon, he received a concentrated attack from 30 magicians and came out unscathed. He couldn't be human."

It's possible with certain magic tool, but the earl and the consul have no idea about it.
The first three candidates who were mentioned cannot clear this condition too, so they are exempted.

"If he's a demon, then that question is solved huh."
"The knight leader who was commanding also reported that, 『He was strong without no doubt, but his movement was like an amateur.』."
"A senior demon who isn't used to fighting huh..."
"Or maybe, it was confused with the difference of the possessed body compared with its real body...."

If the other demons are able to hide themselves, then the threat can't be ignored.
The earl thinks so and translates it into action.

"Alright, arrest all members of Brown Rat guild. Thoroughly investigate everything about this man called Uusu."
"I understand."

◇

"Oh yeah, I almost forgot with the last candidate."

The consul pulls a report from the document stack.

"He's called Satou, a self-proclaimed merchant."
"Self-proclaimed?"
"Yes, the person introduced himself as a merchant but no one in the merchant guild knew him, and he didn't have any business activity during his visit to Seryuu city."

The earl who had his interest piqued chimed in.

"Is he a spy from other country?"
"No, his performance was too poor to be a spy. The only things he did after arriving at this city was just sightseeing and doing tryst with women. He seemed to be well-off but he did nothing but wild merrymaking."
"Sightseeing? In this place... a city with scarce tourist attraction?"
"Yes, it's a good way to check on the city's facilities and road as a way to confirm the nation's power, but it's too conspicuous."
"That's right, I've never seen anyone who goes on a tour in this Seryuu city."

The consul continues his talk after clearing his throat.

"This person is like the three earlier, he was present during both uproars, and was a survivor from the labyrinth."
"Self-proclaimed merchant, but actually an explorer eh?"

The earl finds it quite amusing.

"Well, according to viscount Belton, 『He was excellent at commanding the demi-human slaves, but the actual person himself was mediocre. He's a coward who didn't equip a sword, couldn't use magic, and only stealthily threw stones from behind the demi-human slaves.』, he said."
"Is that guy acquainted with viscount Belton?"
"Rather than an acquaintance, he's the man who rescued viscount Belton when he was caught by monster."
"Hou, should we give him some kind of medal?"

"I think it's unnecessary since the viscount himself is giving him rewards..."

The earl nods while getting back to the story.

"Even without fighting strength, he was able to escape from the labyrinth. We should consider that he has some kind of experience."
"Isn't it just because the demi-human slaves were strong?"
"From the Yamato stone check, they're all level 13, around the level of an average knight."

The consul reports it plainly. His expression doesn't show if he discriminate against demi-human.

"All of his slaves? It's not just one slave who is at the same level as an average knight?"
"Yes, the three are."
"That's some battle potentials."
"Yes, since they're demi-human slaves they're not allowed to have weapons inside the city so there's no problem with the public order, but it's extraordinary for a self-proclaimed merchant's guards."

The earl is contemplating while the consul waits for his master.

"A son of a noble, or a wealthy merchant's son... No, can't be, someone like that would have humans as their guards. The prince of the lost kingdom..."
"I think you're jumping to conclusion for that one."
"You're right, it's fun to guess his identity but there's no meaning to it."
"Yes."
"Let's scout for people to be put into the inspection team for labyrinth city."
"Are you serious about that?"
"Write the candidates."

"I understand."

◇

"Still, the day after he arrived at Seryuu city, he was at the spot where the demon attacked, moreover, the day after that, he was present during the rebellion, and again, he got dragged into the labyrinth. What an unlucky man."
"If that man is bringing in demons then we should expel him from this territory..."
"That can't be. Nebinen testified that he stopped the rebellion, found out the mastermind behind it and discerned the demon."

The earl raises his eyes after hearing the consul's report.

"He's quite an able man. If what Nebinen said isn't a lie..."
"It's not just Nebinen-dono, a magic soldier who was present also testified the same thing."

"Fumu, a mysterious man huh... I'm interested but I can't get free time to meet him."
"Yes, since you need to reorganize the territory army, rebuild the destroyed city, the isolation of the labyrinth and other things that keep piling."

The earl seemingly of doing mischief, grins while crooking his lips.

"About that medal earlier."
"Are you going to really give him one?"
"No, not medal, let's give him gentleman title."
"...court rank is it?"
<TLN: Not sure which rank is the earl is using, so this is going to be temporary although well...>

The consul is unusually shaken with the earl's world and his words is mixed with thorn.

"You don't mind right? It's a rank given to 10 people a year. We don't need to give him position or pension either. At most his privileges are being at the

lowest seat of nobles and exempted of the tax."
"To give a person of unknown birth and parentage a rank, this vassal who has served for generations object."

The earl has anticipated the consul's objection and solemnly states his excuse.

"He saved the oldest member of that vassal, viscount Belton's life, stopped the rebellion, and uncovered the plot of the demon. Aren't those enough for achievements?"
"There is no objection to his achievements but..."
"Furthermore, I'm not giving him viscount or baron rank but a false noble rank of gentleman."

The consul realizes that the earl isn't serious from his expression.

"Please stop joking. Right now is the important time for the earldom to make rapid progress."
"Sorry, forgive me. I was having fun imagining how my vassal would look like if I give a vagabond a court rank..."

Admonished by the consul, the earl apologizes.
Having finished letting off the steam with the joke, the earl and his consul move to their next agenda. Their night is long.

Intermission: Friends of Yuni

I've made new friends today.

They're demi-human girls called Pochi-chan and Tama-chan.
All demi-humans that I've ever meet eyes were like stray cats ready to bare their fangs, they were scary. But those girls are different.

◇

My morning starts early, because I'd get scolded if I don't get to the gate inn before the dawn. When the sky begins to brighten, I leave the orphanage to the main street.
It's dim, but I'm not afraid. Because I'm with other children who are running toward their job's place.

I enter through the back door since the big gate for carriages is closed. The back door is also closed, but for the short me, I can just slip through the small gap.

I head to the staff door through the courtyard. The water is low when I peek at the water jugs. I must fill it before the landlady woke up!
I pick up a bucket and go to the well.

"Kuu~~~~~, heavy~~~~."

Hanging on my body weight, I pull the rope connected with the bucket.
Drawing water is a hard labor. Especially for someone as light like me.
I wonder if the day will come when I can draw water effortlessly like Martha-san?

"Intruder~?"
"Suspicious person nano desu~."

I was surprised by voices from the dark and let go off the ropes.
Ah, even though I was about to succeed...

I turn toward where the voices came from.
From there 4 lights are floating out together with carefree voices!

"Kyaa-----!"
"Unyaa----"
"Nyuu----"

I wasn't able to suppress my scream. But anyone would be surprised if they were in the dark.
Encouraged by that fact, I harshly scold at the someones who are in the dark.

"Don't raise your voice suddenly! I'll have to draw again now!"

"Sorry~?"
"Nano desu~."

Those someones frankly apologizing making me losing my tension.
The sun gradually rises and I can see the faces of those girls.

Those girls are beast-men.

◇

I was surprised at first and shouted, "Don't come here!".
But Pochi and Tama didn't mind it.

"I'll help~""Nodesu~."

Saying so, they begin pulling water in place of me. Pochi quickly pulls the rope like a joke.
I wonder just how strong beast-men children are. Or maybe these girls are

special?

After Pochi is finished drawing the water, this time Tama says, "Unfair~? Tama will also do it~", and begins drawing water. These girls must have thought that this is a play or something!

Oh god I'm sorry, Yuni is a bad girl.
I use the two who are happily playing around until the bucket is full of water. Moreover, not only drawing, they also help me carrying the water.

As a thanks, I will share today's meal with these girls.

◇

I break apart the black bread I've received as breakfast and bring it to the two with soup.
The work here is hard but it's nice because I get delicious meal.

Even without garnish, the soup is far better than the thin soup that is occasionally served on the orphanage, even the slightly sour black beard goes well with it.

There's no the bittt~er steamed gabo fruit or pickled gabo leaves as the only meal!

The two will surely be delighted!

While thinking so, I go to the stable.

There's a big lizard-man woman beside the two girls there!
I'm scared enough to almost drop the soup bowl, but I can't waste the important meal! I frantically bear it.

"Yuni~?""Nano desu~."

The two girls welcome me.

But, wait?

Hey, what are those in your hands?

"Meat~?""Cheese nano desu~."

No way~~~~!
Eh? Eh? That's a lie right?
You can't eat meat even after so many years right?

How do slaves, two demi-human slaves at that, get that kind of expensive thing?
Furthermore, it's quite a big lump!? Huh?

I hold out to keep my drool.
It came out a bit but I immediately wipe it.

"I thought I'd eat with you together..."

'I'll share you this', giving like I'm above them, would be quite comical.

"Ara, aren't you the errand girl? What's your name again? Since you're here already, why don't we eat together?"

From behind the lizard girl, two girls come out. The who started talking is a violet-haired girl of the same age as me, and the other is a black-haired Onee-san with regrettable face.

The violet-haired girl, talks in a really bossy way that I wonder if she's really the same age as me, but she, Arisa, is. She cut the dried meat and cheese lumps and shares it with me.

The lizard girl, called Liza, is going to say something but, Arisa says, "It's

fine, the little girl's share is trivial. Master will surely consent!　If he's mad then I'll be the only one who'd get scolded, moumantai.", and Liza-san understands. I don't really understand what Arisa is saying but now is the time to savor the taste of these meat and cheese.
I puff my cheeks like a squirrel while thoroughly enjoying the taste many times over. I'm sure that I'll remember this day for a while, and I'm confident that even gabo fruits would taste like meat and cheese!

◇

Rather than dividing my meal as a thanks, I got to eat delicious things instead.
Furthermore, after the meal, Pochi and Tama help me taking care of the horses. The two are really strong.
Even Liza-san who was bored, helps changing the litter boxes of the horses.

I thought that demi-humans are scary, was I wrong?

◇

There are good things and also bad things.
The landlady told me and Martha to buy firewoods from the lumber shop.

Umm?　Do we really have to bring this two bundles to the inn?
Martha-san says, "Yosh! Let's do our best~." but you won't be able to easily carry it you know?

Still, I'm an employee, I won't complain. If I carelessly complain I might get fired, and I don't know if I could get another job then. In the future, if possible I don't want to become a courtesan at the street corner.

I lift the firewoods with all my power.

My feet are staggering, but I won't lose.
Since Marthan-chan is carrying bundle of firewoods even bigger than mine!

Carrying the firewoods.

Yes, carrying it.

...Carrying firewoods.

When I'm about to faint, the weight is suddenly no more.

I look up and an unknown man has taken my firewoods.
No, don't take it! I must bring that home!

Before I could complain, Martha-san thanks him.
I said he's unknown, but when I look at him again, it turns out that he's a guest on the inn. He's the person who gave me tips lavishly just by bringing water to his room this morning. It seems he's called Satou-san.

Satou-san not only carry my firewoods but also Martha-san's.
A man is strong after all. He's carrying it without breaking a sweat. I didn't notice it before, but Pochi and Tama who are carrying big rucksacks are together with him. So the master of the two is this man. It might be good to be a slave of this man, I'm thinking such.

◇

When I get back to the inn, I continue to take care of the horses. Pochi and Tama also help me like in the morning.

That's okay.

It's okay?

But.

"Please don't, I'd be scolded by the landlady if I let a guest helps me!"

For the master who's wearing such expensive-looking robe, please don't help me taking care of the horses.

Please stop with that disappointed face.
It's like I'm doing something bad!

◇

"Plate!"

I declare so and flip the card.
The plate is drawn on the back.

"Yes~ this is the third!"

I carefully collect the card that I worked hard to get.

This is a tool for learning letters it seems. At first, Martha-san who can read letter was teaching us but in the middle, Arisa devised this play.

After that, everyone is engrossed with it! This is the first time I've done this play.
I've always wanted to learn how to read letters, but it was like saying, "I want to fly on the sky". It was such dream-like things....

But now it's different!
Only in a few hours, I've learned how to read 7 letters!

◇

Fun thing doesn't last for long they said, but this is too much.
Even though I've made new friends, tomorrow Pochi and Tama are going to leave this Seryuu city.

But I've made a promise to the two. I will absolutely learn words and write them a letter!
I don't know the cost to send a letter, but I have a secret saving of two copper coins. If I have this much, then I should be able to send a letter.

In the evening, when I've finished my work, Satou-san gives me a bag full of wood blocks. When I look inside, although they're a bit poor, they're the same thing as the learning cards.
He says, "It's a thank you for getting along with our girls.", and gives it to me. I want to thank him immediately, but I don't know how to express this gratitude.

◇

Oh yes, the wood-block cards that Satou-san gave become extremely popular at the orphanage. Some interested older children asked for woods waste from the lumber shop and the children who are good with arts drew the pictures.

Even though a week hasn't passed since then, we have already finished making 3 sets.

It'd be nice if everyone becomes able to read letters in one year~
That's my dream.

It's nice if that really happen.
The work is hard as always, but after that day, I'm seeing more happy dreams each day.